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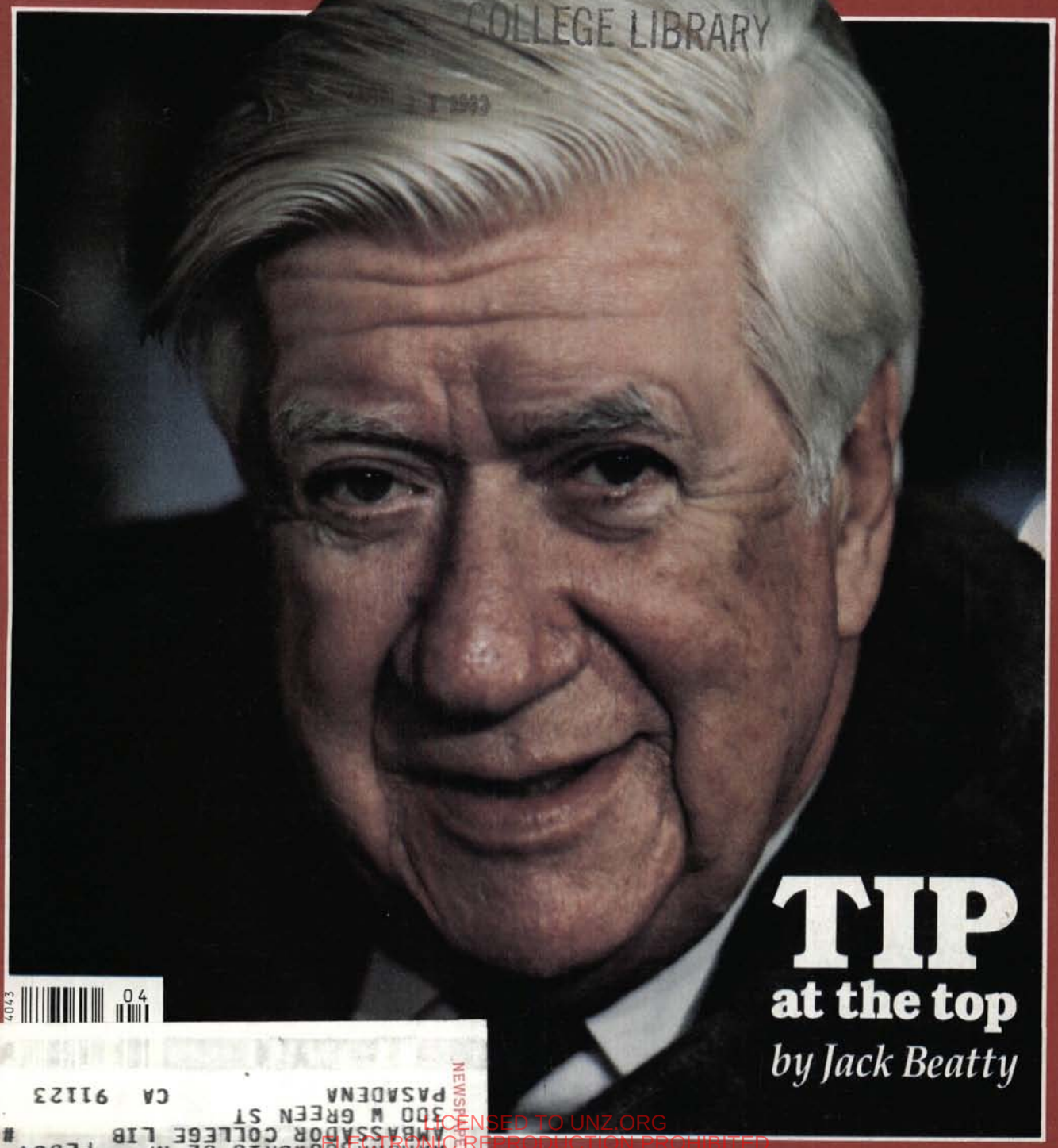

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CORRESPONDENCE

PAC ATTACK

To the editors:

Mark Green's generally fine article, "Political Pac-Man" (TNR, December 13, 1982), erred on two elementary points. First, a federal tax credit, as opposed to a deduction, for small individual political contributions is already law. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the existing provision, a 50 percent offset for donations up to $100, costs the Treasury about $80 million per year. That reflects $160 million in small checks from at least 1.6 million people to federal, state, and local campaigns.

Second, Green wrote that "general election candidates," like nonprofit groups and political parties, should "be able to mail to their constituents at less than 20 cents a letter." They already can. For a small fee, any candidate can use the same bulk rates that commercial mailers use: 10.9 cents per piece for unsorted mail, 9.3 cents per piece if presorted by carrier routes—which, thanks to home computers, even local campaigns can now do. By observing some legal niceties, major party candidates can even employ the bargain rates Congress has given to the National Democratic and Republican Committees, state party committees, and the Senate and House campaign committees. That cuts the cost to 3.8 cents per piece for unsorted mail, 2.9 cents per piece if Zip-sorted, and 1.9 cents per piece for carrier-route presorts.

CARRIE JOHNSON
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:

The article by Mark Green on the influence PACs have on the votes of legislators was a model of research and analysis, carefully written to offend nobody too much. Isn't the subject too serious for pussy-footing?

A bribe is a gift made to an official or other person in a position of power to influence action in favor of the giver. It is a felony.

Campaign contributions are made to influence action on the part of recipients in favor of the donors. The notion that officials or candidates receive these donations with no commitment to do the bidding of those making them is nonsense. They are accepting bribes.

Mr. Green's points were well taken, but oh so polite. Shouldn't we start calling a bribe a bribe? If we do, perhaps the courts will do something about prosecuting both the donors and the recipients.

After all, we don't want criminals running our government.

KALMAN PHILLIPS
Sherman Oaks, California

HOWE AND ORWELL

To the editors:

As a long-time (since 1927) subscriber, I have read very few essays in your journal as impressive as Irving Howe's article on *1984* ("Enigmas of Power," TNR, Year-End Issue, 1982). His (latter-day) analysis of that remarkable book and his keen observations on democratic socialism, sexual love, and especially power, somehow managed in a few pages, should be required reading for all who (still) seek both wisdom and artistry on the printed page. Surely, Irving Howe has become our nonpareil man of letters.

CHARLES H. PAGE
Northampton, Massachusetts

To the editors:

In his "reconsideration" of Orwell's *1984*, Irving Howe omitted any reference to what is perhaps the greatest achievement of this classic—its dissection of the corruption of political discourse since World War II. While Orwell's insights into ideological ironies are brilliant, it is his working out a system of semantics relative to totalitarianism and bureaucratic democracy that sticks in the mind. Terms like "Doublethink" and "Newspeak" have even sharper relevance today in both capitalist and Communist regimes than they did in Orwell's time. (Think of Reagan's labeling of his new missile system as "Peacemaker.")

BURLING LOWREY
Washington, D.C.

WORKER SAFETY STANDARDS

To the editors:

In his article, "Occupational Hazard" (TNR, December 6, 1982), David Seideman begins with a false, undocumented premise: that as head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration I view "worker safety and health standards . . . as a bane to business," and that under my direction "the agency's prime concern has been finding ways to avoid doing its job."

Mr. Seideman then purports to prove these defamatory accusations by misrepresenting OSHA's programs to eliminate unnecessary recordkeeping, improve inspection targeting, and promote voluntary compliance with safety and health rules. Mr. Seideman's initial characterization of these initiatives as "three major programs to excuse industries from compliance with OSHA regulations" is patently false. None of these programs alters the legal responsibility of employers to meet OSHA standards, and I have never issued, proposed, or advocated such an action.

Mr. Seideman marshals no arguments to support his criticism of our proposal to relieve certain statistically safe service industries from general recordkeeping requirements. However, in an innuendo characteristic of his article, he labels the proposal an "Exemption Plan," implying a broader exclusion from OSHA law that has no basis in fact.

The targeting program Mr. Seideman decries is designed to focus safety inspections on the most hazardous individual worksites in the manufacturing sector. Mr. Seideman asserts that the targeting program makes no provision for checking the mandatory injury records that are the trigger for a full-scale inspection. Untrue. Under the program, inspectors may use available worker compensation data to verify the records. The penalty for falsifying an injury/illness log is a fine of up to $10,000, imprisonment for up to six months, or both. The reason better inspection targeting is so important is that OSHA never had and never will have the resources to inspect more than 1 to 2 percent of the nation's workplaces each year. The agency must develop programs to improve worker protection at the 98 percent of the workplaces it cannot visit firsthand. Our voluntary compliance effort does exactly that. Only companies with exemplary safety and health programs—and the injury statistics and documentation to back them up—are eligible for participation. Of course, OSHA would continue to investigate any serious accidents or worker complaints.

In another blatant error, Mr. Seideman says this program includes "no safeguards to protect complaining workers from disciplinary action by their employers." Had Mr. Seideman looked at the Occupational Safety and Health Act, he

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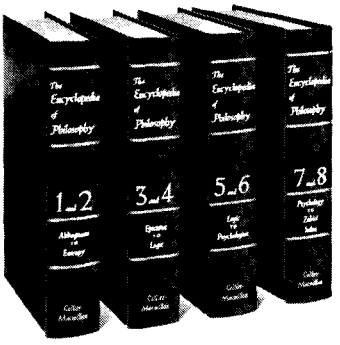

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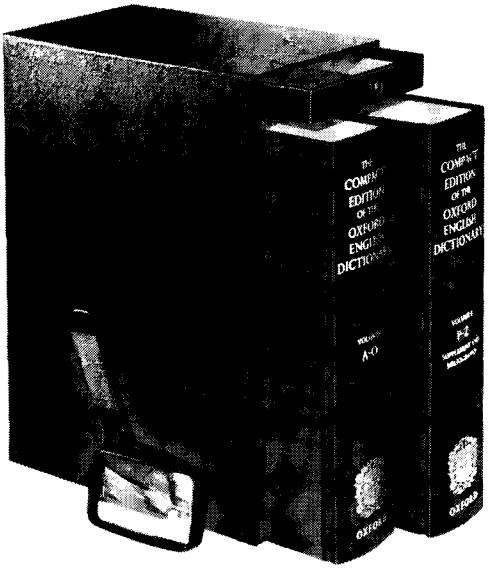

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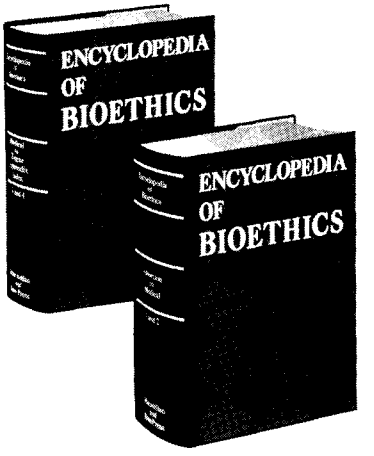

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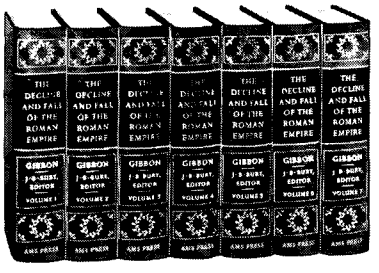

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

would have seen that workers are protected against reprisals by employers for exercising their safety and health rights.

Perhaps the reason that Mr. Seideman relies so heavily on distortions and innuendos in his article is because the facts do not support his thesis. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, recently reported that in 1981, the workplace injury rate dropped to its lowest level in ten years. Employers and workers deserve the credit for this achievement, and I believe our programs and policies contributed to this progress as well.

THORNE G. AUCHTER
Department of Labor
Washington, D.C.

David Seideman replies:
Mr. Auchter is correct that the term "Exemption Plan" was mine, not his; I should have made that clear. Substantively, however, the program's purpose is "to exempt 474,000 employers with about 18.4 million employees in certain retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and services industries from keeping paperwork data." This time the words are his, not mine—in an OSHA press release of June 3, 1982.

If, as Mr. Auchter suggests, his strategy is to redirect OSHA's resources to the most hazardous worksites, one would expect a rechanneling of enforcement, but no diminuation of it. In fact, citations for serious, willful, and repeat violations of safety and health laws have all been sharply reduced.

I share Mr. Auchter's satisfaction that the workplace injury rate has declined to its lowest level in ten years, but much of this is due to the policies he inherited from the Carter Administration and to the recession and the fewer number of jobs. I hope this trend will continue after his policies take hold, but from all indications the opposite will be true.

Envy And Malice

To the editors:
Nine columns of supercilious Cantabrigian contumely heaped on the oft-abused Leslie Fiedler is simply not to be borne, especially from Christopher Ricks, whose long addiction to lowbrow Americanisms and stale French phrases renders this a case of the pot calling the kettle chartreuse ("I Contain Mobs," TNR, December 20, 1982). Nor do I agree that Fiedler yearns to be an untroubled nonelitist, for that would put him aboard the same ramshackle houseboat with Marvin Mudrick.

Fiedler makes a trifling slip about discovering Eliot's fondness for music halls from "biographical sources" when he should have known it from the Marie Lloyd essay, and Ricks immediately accuses him of wishing to deride Eliot for condescension and camp, for secretly habituating La Vache Sous La Rose (the "in" *boîte* under Le Boeuf Sur Le Toit) where Housman went looking for sailors. They're both trying to say, in their childish way, that Eliot was a closet fag, singing, "When tearing off a game of golf, I may make a play for the cadduh, but when I do I don't follow through, 'cause my heart belongs to Dada. . . ." Eliot's loftiness is often taken for condescension—he was also without Ricks's trendy frothiness—but the latter's notion that he demanded that the lower orders keep their place is ludicrous. He would delight in the effrontery of the pearlies; it was the middle class that he likened to the Melanesians reduced by civilization to apathetic hulks.

After forty years of reading professorial diatribes, I would unhesitatingly name Ricks as the nastiest practitioner of the genre still sneering. He and his kind are pinned, wriggling, by Eric Hoffer: "Wherever these people come together the air will be charged with envy and malice."

DAVID WILSON
Albany, California

Usual Suspects

To the editors:
Manny Farber's December 14, 1942, review of *Casablanca*, reported in the "Notebook" section (TNR, December 20, 1982), reassures me that your standards of reviewing have gone up appreciably in forty years. Mr. Farber wrote of "the contrast in villains of Veidt, Greenstreet, and Lorre." All three often played villains, but in *Casablanca* Greenstreet and Lorre wore white hats.

Mr. Farber also wrote of "the scene in which the fighting Frenchmen drown out the Germans' 'Horst Wessel' by singing their 'Marseillaise.' " To begin with, they weren't "fighting Frenchmen"; they were supporters of Vichy, and not fighting anybody. And I'm really surprised that Mr. Farber, as late as the end of 1942, still didn't know what the "Horst Wessel" sounded like. What the Germans sang, of course, was the admirable patriotic song, "Die Wacht am Rhein"; which Germans were singing before either "Horst Wessel" or Hitler were ever heard of.

CHARLES WRONG
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida

That Old Black Magic

To the editors:
Edmund Leach's review of Daniel Lawrence O'Keefe's *Stolen Lightning* (TNR, December 27, 1982) is a critical statement based on his admission that he is one of many anthropologists who do not think magic is important. He says, "We feel that with the passage of time, 'magic' like 'totenism' has become a nonsubject." As a student of magic, I wish to defend O'Keefe's effort by defending magic.

Leach rejects O'Keefe's attempt to argue for "Strict" and "Weak" senses of magic: "If we use the . . . criteria employed by . . . O'Keefe, then I engage in a magical performance every time I go through the 'rite' of making a cup of coffee." Precisely. Magic is the use of rites to make the external world conform to an individual's internal desires, so if coffee is desired and it is made, then magic has been done. But magic is done in the weakest sense. The strict sense can also be drawn out of Leach's work.

Leach rejects magic as a universal category and talks of three other aspects of human action: the operational (do things), the symbolic (say things), and the potent. Potency is a combination of physical power over "nature" and metaphysical social "power" over men. The argument, he says, is that human potency involves both operational and symbolic human action and it is impossible to distinguish between physical and metaphysical potency. Again, precisely. Strict magic is the use of symbolic action and metaphysical potency to create operational action and physical potency. In the strict sense, if coffee is desired and a rite is performed that instantly changes a cup of water into coffee, that is magic.

Leach says many Western scholars of the early 1900s resented this reliance on metaphysical potency, and pejoratively labeled as "magic" any potency of which they disapproved. The value of O'Keefe's work lies in its discussion of this treatment of magic. O'Keefe's has created what may be the definitive collection of the nonaccepting view of magic.

DEAN ROWLEY
Atlanta, Georgia

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Presidential Theater

There, in the midst of a near-blizzard, on a flatbed truck in front of a newspaper building in Manchester, New Hampshire, the leading Democratic Presidential candidate is so angered by the published comments about his wife that his voice catches. Twice he can't proceed; I watch the snowflakes melt and trickle down his red cheeks, though whether it is tears or snow I can't see. It is Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine, of course, on February 28, 1972, and he is throwing away his Presidential candidacy in the snows of New Hampshire.

There is nothing in the politics of the world stranger than the way Americans pick their President, except the office of the Presidency itself, with Congress always ready to paralyze the President and the President always ready to veto Congress. Now the show is starting up again. During the week of January 15, most of the party's leading aspirants will be on display at a Democratic conference in California, and then we shall be plunged into the two-year, straw-vote, popularity-poll, state primary calendar that will compete with football and the World Series for the public's attention until the next Presidential election in November 1984. On other stages, meanwhile, there will be world debates on the recession and nuclear arms.

But let me look back again. Who is this newcomer in 1976? He is traveling over the area I covered with Muskie. It is peanut farmer and former governor Jimmy Carter, fresh and attractive, running against Washington, preaching love, trust, integrity. I find him appealing as our caravan goes through the wintry villages and towns. Audiences yearn to believe. They are searching for something, always searching. He is earnest in manner. In that first primary February 24, 1976, out of a total of 22,895 Democratic votes Carter gets 29 percent, Morris Udall 24 percent, Birch Bayh 16 percent. Journalists hail it as a great Carter victory. He is now the "front runner" and goes on to take the White House on the world stage.

What about one other candidate in New Hampshire? California's Ronald Reagan is trying to seize the Republican nomination from President Ford. Reporters crunch behind him over the snow with knots of well-bundled people smiling back at his friendly, relaxed, good-guy face. He is making his celebrated pitch to turn a quarter of the funds collected by Washington back to the states. He could save New Hampshire $15 million in collection charges, he says. At the airport I ask if this doesn't include money for the Army and Navy and interstate highways and things like that. With amiable eagerness he tells me that he doesn't know if his figures include defense and those other things; if so, he will correct his estimate. The source? "It was someone up here," he explains easily. His answers make headlines: He tells the crowd at Perkins Hotel, Littleton, New Hampshire: "There is one cause and one cause alone for inflation." We wait. "Over-spending!" Mild applause.

Now, in 1983, the Presidential cycle turns into its next phase with the handicappers and opinion polls already beginning their work and the Democratic hopefuls assembling in California next week. Look them over, folks! Will Reagan run again? I doubt it, but he may. With 12 million people unemployed, he's in trouble. His 72nd birthday comes next month. Should he bother? But the greatest problem is deeper than that. It's the problem of whether this one-man system of ours can carry the free world along with it. It is "the vacuum in the center." As *Washington Post* columnist David Broder wrote recently, "The gravest problem we face is the lack of confidence in the man to whom this country and much of the rest of the world looks for leadership."

Anybody can see that a negotiating struggle lies just ahead with Soviet leader Yuri Andropov. We are bargaining against a stockpile of 50,000 nuclear weapons whose explosive force equals 3.5 tons of T.N.T. for every person on earth. The stockpile keeps the world poor. The problem of negotiating is coming to a head. We threaten to deploy 572 American missiles in Europe against Russia at year-end if we don't make progress with Moscow. There is some optimism: we are at the bargaining table in Geneva; we have called for deep cuts; the Russians are willing to talk and have made preliminary counteroffers—unacceptable, but at least they're still playing the game. "I believe that the Soviet initiative may be worthy of further serious negotiation," says W. Averell Harriman, who negotiated the 1963 limited test ban treaty. "On the question of nuclear war," he says, "self-interest is common interest. And, if I am certain of anything, I am certain that the Soviet leaders are as concerned to avoid a nuclear war as we are."

It comes down ultimately to faith in leadership, and particularly in President Reagan. It is a test of confidence in him, not just among Americans but among our allies, too. Will they trust him? The European peace movement will be agitating again before long. Can Reagan do the things that persuade our allies that he is a reasonable man? The Russians, of course, will mount a propaganda blitz trying to separate us from our allies.

I would say the result looks uncertain. The chief asset for peace is the sheer idiocy of carrying on the escalating arms race. Congress will not have much say in what happens; our government puts international initiative in the hands of the White House, not Congress. Those Democratic Presidential hopefuls posing for television in California can't do much either: they will be wise to take a bland global view for a while and stick to the economy. Ronald Reagan has his chance now to try to reach an arms agreement and, failing that, to carry democratic countries along with him. He did not win points when he confronted our allies over the Russian gas pipeline and tried to enforce sanctions. He has not inspired enthusiasm abroad, though he is still popular. Perhaps the most hopeful thing in Washington is quiet, big-framed, soft-spoken, self-assured George P. Shultz, Secretary of State, replacing the agitated Alexander Haig. Shultz may not be as good as he looks but many think he is the best thing in the Reagan Administration.

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JANUARY 24, 1983

THE PLOT SICKENS

"Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous. . . ." So said Richard III in his scheming soliloquy. Yuri Andropov may be saying the same thing. And, unlike the Duke of Gloucester, the chairman of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would mean by inductions, inductions. There is no proof that Andropov ordered the Pope murdered. There may never be such proof. But that may not be because he didn't. The problem is, of course, that we do not yet know the truth, but until the Italian prosecutor in the case of Mehmet Ali Agca makes public the evidence linking him to Soviet interests, the problem is also that we do not know what to believe. It would be foolish to inflame our thinking about the Russians on the basis of suspicions and speculations. It would be equally foolish, however, to turn away from the possibility that this most base act was conceived and "controlled" by the Kremlin. The system of nations is not a system of law, in which you are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Based upon what we know about the manner in which states vie for power, and about the relationship of means to ends in Soviet history, and about the role of international terrorism in the struggle between East and West, the presumption of guilt is surely as plausible as the presumption of innocence.

At least it should be. When Judge Illio Martella arrested Sergei Antonov, a Bulgarian in Rome, for complicity in the plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II, he may have revealed more about the present moral and intellectual condition of the West than he did about the case he was investigating. The events leading to the shots in St. Peter's Square are now reconstructed by everybody in the image of their own desire. William Safire, who has an almost unhealthy interest in every hum and buzz in the corridors of Communist power, rushed into print with a potboiler account of how it was all done. ("At that point, somewhere, in some language, a person in high authority said 'Kill the Pope.'") Once again Mr. Safire's narrative suffered from a confusion of tense. Still, he may be erring in the right direction. He is certainly more on the mark than those who simply dismissed out of hand the idea that Andropov may have activated Agca. There appeared a chorus of liberal incredulity. The operation, it was said, was too crude, too risky, too unprofitable, for the Russians to undertake. In fact, the objections to "the Bulgarian connection" were based not upon the evidence, which is not yet known, nor upon calculations of probability, which cut both ways. They were based upon the reluctance to have a view of the world upset. Soviet involvement in the attempt upon the Pope would damage a view of Soviet behavior—that it is not aggressive but defensive, that it expands only as it is encircled, that it does not include adventures among its tactics. It would interfere with a view, current even among some officials of the present Administration, that a change in the Soviet leadership is always an improvement, that the new regime in Russia presents a new opportunity, which all this spook stuff shouldn't be allowed to destroy. And it would refute a view of American behavior, according to which "dirty tricks" are supremely the instruments of American foreign policy. A generation formed by the misdeeds in Vietnam and in Chile believes that "destabilization" is what only America does, and does best. This belief would not survive Judge Martella's allegations, if they hold up. As Prime Minister Fanfani said, this would be "the gravest act of destabilization the world has seen for 60 years." Shooting a Pope is certainly as grave as exploding Castro's cigar. But the tenacity with which this demonological view of America and this undemonological view of Russia are held is impressive. *Le Monde* went so far as to suggest that it is all "disinformation" put out by Andropov's rivals, with the assistance of the C.I.A., to "destabilize" the new Soviet regime. That is pretty sophisticated. We conclude that credulity is always there when it is called for.

What, indeed, to believe? Like anybody who has tried to make sense out of the sensations of the press, we are more than a little baffled. In December *The New York Times* reported that the Israelis don't buy it (who would want more to buy it than the Israelis?) and in January the

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Times reported that the Israelis do. This much, at least, does recommend Judge Martella's theory: the circumstances, and the motive. The circumstances are Agca's well-heeled sojourn in Bulgaria, which is the Soviet empire's laundry for money, drugs, guns, and terrorists, and his links with Bulgarians in Italy who were themselves linked to Bulgarian intelligence. If "the Bulgarian connection" exists, furthermore, "the Russian connection" exists. A former colonel in the Bulgarian secret service told a French daily that "in operations of a truly international character, they always follow the directives of the K.G.B., which has its own officials in every sector of Bulgarian espionage." As for the motive, it would be Poland. The workers' revolution in Poland that was represented by the rise of Solidarity presented the Soviet Union with a situation in which a Pope had divisions. Even if it is an exaggeration to say that Solidarity owed its existence to the election of a Polish Pope, it is true that the first independent trade union in the Soviet orbit had no stronger ally than John Paul II. He is reported to have threatened that he would "lay down the crown of St. Peter" and return to Poland if the Russians invaded. The man was clearly a curse on Communism at the moment of its greatest crisis.

But maybe not enough of a curse for the K.G.B. to put out a contract. Circumstances are not evidence, and neither is motive. This is not Perry Mason. We must await the completion of the Italian inquiry, and the full presentation of its results. (At Antonov's trial, perhaps.) Americans are anyway wary of the intellectual trap of conspiracy theories, which cannot distinguish between plausibility and truth. The United States must not alter its attitudes toward the Soviet Union because "the Bulgarian connection" is only plausible, or modify its policies because of mere inductions. (It must never alter or modify its commitment to arms control.) Secretary of State Shultz has wisely counseled patience. But even before the truth of the matter is established, there is a conclusion that may be drawn, which is that we must be the kind of people who are prepared to think that such an evil is possible. We must recover the imagination that the political world requires. Without it, we may be played for suckers. The principles for which we stand may go down if we see them everywhere.

The Deficit Depresses

Fiscal year 1984 would be the one, Ronald Reagan told us back in political year 1980, in which the federal budget would be balanced. In fact, of course, Mr. Reagan's proposed deficit for fiscal 1984, assuming the President's subordinates are minimally honest about the numbers, will be in excess of $175 billion. "It could be worse than that," one of those subordinates said the other day. "Every time I come into work in the morning, the projections are $10 billion worse than they were the day before. The reason is the economic forecasts for next year, which keep getting worse. Those forecasts have been all too accurate, which is the only economic good news to be found."

The best that the President's economic advisers can foresee is a 3 percent growth rate for next year, leaving unemployment as high at 10 percent. Day by day, economic forecasts get gloomier. There is no sign of major new investment in plant and equipment; more important, exports are down and heading lower. Compounding the problems of an overvalued dollar (which makes American products more expensive than foreign products) and the world recession is the fact that austerity programs instituted by debtor countries are forcing them to stop buying American-made goods. Meanwhile, the rest of the world goes on expecting the United States to drag it out of recession.

PRESIDENT REAGAN has been told time and time again how bad things are and how much worse things might get. He has been told that his policies—tax cuts and defense increases—have produced a structural deficit of about 4 percent of G.N.P., and not just for this fiscal year but for the foreseeable future. He has been told that these deficits mean that the government will have to keep dipping into the private savings pool in order to pay its debts, sopping up an estimated 75 percent of available investment funds. He has been told this will keep interest rates up, prevent businesses from investing and people from buying cars and houses, and choke off recovery. And he's been told that if we fail to recover, so will the rest of the world. What he may now dimly understand is that self-sustaining recession is the functional definition of Depression.

Mr. Reagan's advisers have also told him how to reduce the deficits—through a "balanced package" of domestic spending cuts, defense spending cuts, tax increases, and looser money. Democrats would add public works programs to stimulate the economy fiscally and put people to work, thereby reducing unemployment and welfare benefits. By all accounts, Mr. Reagan has rejected this balanced approach. So far he has refused to countenance any tax increases or defense cuts for the budget he is preparing. And he abhors jobs programs. This leaves nothing but drastic additional domestic cuts, which Congress will properly reject, and monetary policy.

Printing money is all the rage these days in both the Republican and Democratic parties. Even supply-side economists favor it. So do we, within limits. The Federal Reserve Board was as excessive in squeezing the money supply to control inflation during the first eighteen months of the Reagan Administration as the Administration was in cutting taxes and increasing defense. In the last several months, though, the Fed has relented and interest rates have come down. With the nation's industrial plant operating at 60 percent of capacity, it is

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unlikely that more money-printing will ignite a new round of ruinous inflation anytime soon.

The real danger is that if the government relies exclusively on monetary policy, the recovery, if any, will be anemic and short-lived—which brings us back to Mr. Reagan's enormous deficit. To induce long-term investment and sustained recovery, the U.S. doesn't need to show a balanced budget next year—that would only make a bad situation worse—but it does need to demonstrate that steadily decreasing deficits are not an outright structural impossibility for the future. And the best way to guarantee that is through a variation of the balanced-package approach.

Defense cuts: During the 1980 campaign, Ronald Reagan advocated real defense increases of 5 percent per year. After President Carter produced a budget including just such increases, President Reagan thought he had to go him one better, so now defense spending is rising at a rate of 8 percent per year. *Newsweek* has shown how we can get back to the original formula: by canceling the B-1 bomber, two big aircraft carriers, the MX missile, and several smaller programs, saving $2.7 billion this year and $56 billion over five years.

Tax increases: A recession is no time to increase the total take of federal income taxes. But now that the supply-side rationale for the Reagan tax cuts has vanished, and everyone admits that their purpose is frankly stimulative, there is no longer even the shred of a justification for continuing to skew them in favor of the rich. The less well-off are likelier to spend the extra money anyway, and that is now the point. Meanwhile, with oil prices falling, we could impose higher energy taxes to maintain conservation. We could phase out mortgage interest deductions, starting with deductions for second homes. We could cap deductions for consumer interest and eliminate the sales tax deduction. And we should certainly close corporate tax loopholes, which in spite of last year's tax law changes still put the government in the position of paying businesses to invest.

Domestic cuts: Categorical aid programs and entitlements benefiting the poor already have been cut unconscionably. They should no longer bear the burden of deficit-narrowing. To the extent that domestic spending is cut further, this should come from such middle-class entitlements as Social Security (see "Lame Duck Blues," TNR, January 10 & 17) and federal retirement benefits.

Public works and jobs programs: We favor putting people to work and repairing America's infrastructure, but these programs are deficit-builders, at least in the short run. They have to be paid for with higher taxes, and they have to be put into place with an eye to getting maximum benefit for any expenditure. That is, employees on public works programs should not be paid prevailing union rates. Emphasis should be placed on urgently needed projects, not on pork-barrel. And job training and retraining should be a priority wherever possible.

What's called for now is a compact between the President and Democrats in Congress, not combat. But the President seems set on a confrontation course with Congress. "The scenario that concerns me," House Budget Committee chairman James Jones of Oklahoma has said, "is that in 1983 the President will abdicate and Congress will stalemate, deficits will significantly exceed $200 billion, interest rates will go back up, the dollar will strengthen, exports will decline, imports will increase, and unemployment will go up even further. If that happens, you could look for protectionist legislation and a big jobs program, and that combination could send us and the world into a depression."

Is the President listening?

NOTEBOOK

□ "ONLY CONGRESSMEN with a fair amount of chutzpah can awaken the public conscience," Ben Rosenthal once said. Mr. Rosenthal had plenty of chutzpah. He opposed the Vietnam War from the day he was elected to Congress, from a Queens district, in 1962. He carved out an impressive record as a champion of poor people and consumers, and he was the first and only legislator to investigate OPEC's huge and often concealed operations in the United States. In his quiet, perservering way, Ben Rosenthal showed that one man can make a difference, and his death leaves Congress and the country poorer.

□ IN THE MATTER of the Middle East, gullibility takes a specific scholarly form. Since Yasir Arafat never says unambiguously that Israel has a right to exist, his ambiguous pronouncements are subjected to a hopeful kind of hermeneutics. The analysis of the P.L.O. now consists largely in the exegesis of its chairman's texts—sort of a cross between Kremlinology and the Talmud. A splendid instance of the method (*la P.L.O. en rose*) may be found in *Foreign Policy* magazine, where Herbert Kelman, Cabot Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard, reports on four hours of conversation with Mr. Arafat. "In an interesting exchange that ensued, Arafat's aide added that the Israelis were arrogant, but Arafat insisted that they were stupid. His aide then proposed the compromise that they were stupid because they were arrogant. Arafat replied: "No, they are arrogant because they are stupid." Mr. Kelman offers this commentary: "The tone and context of Arafat's remark indicated that he was not thinking of stupidity as an unalterable genetic condition. On the contrary, his insistence on the primacy of stupidity again implies an image of the Israelis as a people not beyond redemption. . . . The primacy of stupidity in Arafat's image of the Israelis suggests he thinks of them as people with whom he is prepared to deal. . . . " No, this is not like Kremlinology, and it is not like the Talmud. It is like Woody Allen. And on this basis Israel is expected to lower its defenses.

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□ FORTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "What does it mean when the President forecasts an expenditure of a hundred billion dollars on war in the fiscal year 1944, and a national debt of somewhere near two hundred billions at the end of it? These figures are so huge that they cannot be understood in terms of the dollars we as individuals spend or the amounts we owe. As far as any concrete impression they may convey to us is concerned, he might as well have said that the government is going to spend a lot of money and will have a bigger debt than anybody ever heard of. Instead of the numerical symbols consisting of figures and zeroes, he might just as well have said that the bill will be *n* dollars and the debt *x* dollars." ("Can We Afford the War," by George Soule, January 25, 1943.)

Of time and the Crimson Tide.

Goodbye To The Bear

ACCORDING TO the University of Alabama football records, the date would have to have been September 27, 1958. I was in the back seat of a 1957 Dodge, hurtling down the long lap of Alabama from Birmingham toward the bleak gumbo prairie south of Montgomery, past the roadside cafe of a man who entertained customers by brandishing the shotgun he would use in case "the niggers" tried to eat barbecue at his counter. We were on a sporting venture of some kind, bound for a cabin in the pinelands. I was fifteen years old. My elders sat in the front seat fiddling with the radio that, on a maddeningly intermittent signal, brought astounding news from Mobile. The University of Alabama, which had won four games in the previous three years, was ahead of Louisiana State University, the predicted national champion. Finally, Alabama lost, but not before it was clear that the new coach was a serious citizen. That is my first memory of Bear Bryant. Now, two hundred eighty-seven games and twenty-five years of adulation later, after coaching more victories than anyone in the history of college football, the old man is retiring.

In the past few weeks, the hagiographers of the sports pages and the announcing booth have worked him over pretty well. But before he is enshrined forever as an Icon of Sports, it is worth remembering that Paul William Bryant Jr. was also a public man who lived in a poor and troubled state at a grim time. The year 1958, when Bryant fielded his first Alabama team, was also the year in which George C. Wallace made his first campaign for governor. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, these two men were the dominant figures of public life in Alabama and the state's main representatives to the nation. In that time, they so dominated the consciousness of the state that it is only in relation to Wallace that we can understand the service that Bear Bryant did Alabama and how, like so many lesser men, he also failed that state in the midnight of its humiliation.

In somewhat the same way that friendly businesses launder money for the Mafia, some friendly journals, most recently *Time* magazine, have laundered Wallace's reputation into that of a harmless folk character whose youthful aberrations can be dismissed with the mildly pejorative sobriquet, "former segregationist." That is not the way it was. To become governor, Wallace made a pact with evil that required him to publicize the fiction that Alabama's police and courts were powerless to prevent violence up to and including murder. The state's poor, uneducated whites, their passions stirred by racial bugaboos a century in the making, went where this man led them. Without straining my memory, I can think of eight blacks and three sympathetic whites who were either shot to death or blown up in Wallace's first term.

To be sure, Wallace's claque loved him. But there were also thousands of Alabamians smart enough to hate Wallace for giving them cause for shame so strong it could be felt as a physical symptom, something that rose up in the throat like a knot of vomit. The record is pretty strong that Bryant shared this contempt for Wallace. He is credited with working behind the scenes to help Frank A. Rose, the university president, tone down Wallace's behavior during the governor's Stand in the Schoolhouse Door at the university in 1963. Later there was an attempt to draft Bryant to run for governor against Wallace, and he flirted with the idea. But in the end, Bryant decided against confronting Wallace publicly. In making that decision, Bryant did no worse than other wealthy or progressive or educated Alabamians who feared Wallace or feared Klan reprisal or feared being taken for a "nigger lover." The leadership of the state was paralyzed by the slick-haired little pol with the spittle-stained cigar jutting from his truculent pan of a face. But there was one difference between Bryant and the other Alabamians who backed down, and that is the pity of it. Bear Bryant was big enough to have taken on Wallace, and he would not necessarily have had to give up football and run for office to do it. If he had offered one clear-cut public gesture of condemnation, who knows what might have been spared that benighted state?

FOR IN ALABAMA Bryant became a revered personage with dumbfounding speed. His rise to prominence paralleled Wallace's and, in the early years, outstripped it. Only four seasons after that first game in Mobile in 1958, Alabama won the national championship. While Bryant was transforming the Crimson Tide, Wallace was transforming himself. Running as a racial moderate, he lost the 1958 gubernatorial race. Running as the Klan candidate, he won in 1962—and promised "segregation forever." In 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was passed, largely in reaction to the Wallace-condoned police attacks on Birmingham blacks in the

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previous year, Alabama won another national championship. In 1965, when the Voting Rights Act was passed, largely in reaction to the Wallace-excused violence on the Selma March, Alabama won again.

By this time, veneration of Bryant was at a peak. Three national championships in five years gave him a cult following that Wallace never matched. But Bryant, who had declined to confront Wallace for spiritual leadership of the state in the time of violence, also declined to let his team lead the way as a model of peaceful desegregation in the calmer days of the late 1960s. Not until 1971, when Alabama was already one of the most fully integrated states in the union, would the university field its first black players. Bryant left it to federal judges and obscure school superintendents to bear the burden of desegregating public education in Alabama.

EVEN SO, Bryant led the state to a turning point in its racial psychology, and that brings us to the positive side of his legacy. Ironically, the vehicle for this leadership was the 1965 team, which was the last all-white squad from any college to win a national football title. In preparing that team for an Orange Bowl game with an integrated Nebraska team, Bryant provided an example of simple decency around which the state could rally. He enforced a rigid discipline of sportsmanship on the team that went beyond a ban on dirty tactics and racial taunts. The Alabama players' insistence on helping fallen opponents to their feet bordered on the comic, but the intention was not to humiliate or patronize their rivals. It was, as everyone in Alabama knew, to show the national sports audience that the state's football team was more civilized than its governor. Alabama played with a kind of desperate politeness, and afterward one could sense a palpable statewide resistance, especially in the press and political community, to interpreting the victory as a triumph of white supremacy. In Birmingham, I heard a talk show host hang up on a caller for suggesting as much. The behavior of that football team reflected a change that was going on in the psyche of a state weary of racial confrontation and the serial embarrassments of Wallace's first three years in office. If Bryant had refused to confront Wallace, his team had at least shown that Alabamians were capable of sane conduct in a racially charged environment.

Seventeen years later, it seems odd that a football game could play a role in shaping the public mentality. But Alabama in those days was a still pond in which even the tiniest pebble of humane behavior made a big ripple. Having lived in the state in that time, I am convinced that Bryant and the Alabama football team played a more generalized, although inadvertent, role in controlling what the author Carl Carmer called the state's "old irresistible urge" toward racial violence. That urge arose in large measure from white Alabama's ingrained feelings of inferiority and guilt over its racial history, its schools, its police, and, of course, the politicians it elected. Bryant and his teams provided a diversion from the old compulsions. They gave the state at least one thing to be proud of when Wallace was making it an object of opprobrium. If Bryant never stood up to Wallace as he might have, he at least forced the little man to share center stage, and the coach's huge, calm presence made Wallace look small and shrill.

So there it stands. With Bryant we have seen the end of something. Wallace, for his part, used the year of Bryant's retirement to win another term as governor. Even now, I am sure that somewhere in America there is a reporter preparing to fly south to file a dispatch characterizing Wallace as a durable old populist whose monument will be a redemptive spate of good works for the little people. It is not to be. Wallace has reached an accommodation with the coal interests. His final monument will be built by strip miners who are even now turning the lovely hills of North Alabama into a rubble that it will break your heart to see.

And Coach Bryant—what of him? He, of course, will enter that pantheon of Dixie nostalgia where George can never go. In part, this is because Bryant offers memories of victory rather than defeat, but the reasons go deeper than that. Alabamians may elect raucous bumpkins, but they do not like to be thought of as the kind of people who would associate with them. If Wallace represented Alabama's reality, Bryant was its aspiration.

Even dating back to the Civil War, Alabama's history had been more grubby than grand; its heroes were small bore. But in Bear Bryant, with his big frame and the crumpled face that looks like the relief map of a river system, Alabama at last had a hero of mythic scale. And if he failed, by keeping quiet when he might have spoken, and by staying perhaps a season too long, at least he was never common.

FOR THAT, many Alabamians will remember him fondly and miss him, and I count myself in their number. On December 29, I watched the broadcast of Bryant's last game. It was a victory just solid enough to arouse the hope that what is called "Alabama's winning tradition" can go on without him. But after twenty-five years in the stands, in front of television sets, and, later, hunched over radios in distant cities where the signal from home was almost too faint to hear, I am tempted to announce my retirement as an Alabama fan. It can, after all, never be as good again. And believe me, to have been in the city of Tuscaloosa in October when you were young and full of Early Times and had a shining Alabama girl by your side—to have had all that and then to have seen those red shirts pour onto the field, and, then, coming behind them, with that inexorable big cat walk of his, the man himself, The Bear—that was very good indeed.

HOWELL RAINES

Howell Raines is a Washington correspondent for *The New York Times*.

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How an industry undid itself.

SNARLING CARS

LINCOLN-MERCURY COUGAR SLAIN

PITTSBURGH (UPI)—*The cougar that served as the Lincoln-Mercury advertising trademark was shot and killed today after it attacked a 9-year-old boy at an automobile show.*—News item.

IN THIS MACABRE incident, the cougar seized the boy by the neck, pinned him to the ground, resisted all efforts by the trainer to pull him from his prey, and was finally shot to death by an off-duty policeman. The boy, suffering severe neck wounds, was rushed to the hospital in serious condition. He has since recovered. The health of the American automobile industry, however, still hangs in the balance.

For decades, one of Detroit's major advertising ploys was to market its products as instruments of violence. During the entire postwar period, in fact, Detroit's marketing strategy was not to sell automobiles as sensible family transportation, as one might expect in a reasonably civilized society, but as vehicles of mayhem and destruction.

What's in a name? In Detroit's case, plenty. Because over the years, as an auto writer once observed, the very names Detroit managers gave to their cars reveal quite plainly the industry's appeal to motives of violence and aggression. Consider the Oldsmobile *Cutlass*, the Buick *Le Sabre*, the Plymouth *Fury*, the Plymouth *Barracuda*, the Chevrolet Corvette *Stingray*, the Ford Mustang *Cobra*, the American Motors *Matador*, the Mercury *Lynx*, Mercury *Bobcat*, and Mercury *Cougar*—killers all, the last one, this time, almost literally. The theme of violence in these names has a cunning economic logic behind it. As we now know, Detroit management's guiding theology during the postwar era was: big car, big profit; small car, small profit. And what better way to sell big, powerful cars than to link them in the public's mind with the libidinal release of destructive impulses?

In the postwar auto industry, as the horsepower race heated up, the managers of each company dropped ever-larger and hungrier engines into ever-bigger, heavier, and more option-laden automobiles. As late as 1970, 85 percent of U.S. cars were sold with V-8 engines. Consequently, as one sage assessed the peculiar logic of the American automobile industry, Detroit sold a 5,000-pound car to a 100-pound woman so she could drive one block to buy a one-pound loaf of bread. When Marx wrote of the anarchy of production under capitalism, he knew whereof he spoke, though he lived before Detroit management had honed the principle to perfection.

Of all the gadgets on the Road Locomotives (as Consumers Union called these American behemoths thirty years ago), none so clearly opens a window into the mind of the Detroit executive as the design of the speedometer. In keeping with management's appeal to raw power rather than sensible transportation, the speedometer had to show speeds of 120, 140, or 150 miles per hour—far faster, of course, than was safe, legal, or even possible for most cars. But when you scale up a small gauge with speeds to 150 m.p.h., the numbers must all be crammed so close together that it's difficult to read any of them. Here in a nutshell (or a dial) were management's values: style and libido over engineering logic. And while Detroit managers were busy refining these priorities with tail fins and sleek but dangerous hardtop convertibles (whose roofs, lacking a center pillar, might collapse if the car rolled over), foreign manufacturers were making disc brakes and radial tires.

When Detroit's managers are accused of foisting the Road Locomotives on the American public and thus being unprepared for the small-car revolution, they neatly shift the blame to the public. The postwar dinosaurs weren't their idea, they protest, they were simply giving their customers what they wanted. This, the consumer sovereignty argument, overlooks the fact that consumer taste does not develop in a vacuum but is shaped by manufacturers through massive advertising. In one recent year, the auto industry spent $700 million on TV ads, $340 million more on newspaper ads, and $225 million for magazine advertising—well over $1 billion in just one year (not counting the money spent on radio, billboards, and other forms of advertising). Throughout the postwar years Detroit spent comparable billions fashioning public taste for the gas guzzlers, and then proceeded to satisfy that taste.

OF COURSE, public taste cannot be totally programmed by advertising. Ford failed to generate much interest in the Edsel, and some new and highly promoted products do occasionally fail. Nonetheless, though massive advertising cannot guarantee demand for individual products, there is no question that the billions Detroit spent after World War II pushing the big, heavy, powerful V-8s did in fact create the taste and habit for these cars. Because of postwar affluence, which allowed an ethic of conspicuous waste, and because of the underlying macho element in American culture, there was a basic public receptivity to the marketing strategy of selling murder on wheels. But if the ground was fertile, Detroit management sowed the seeds and carefully tended the fields.

In 1949 the U.A.W.'s research and engineering people published an article, "A Motor Car Named Desire," that called on Detroit to build a small, light, affordable car, suitable for postwar urban America. They cited a contemporary opinion survey taken by the Society of Automotive Engineers, which showed that 60 percent of Americans wanted the U.S. auto industry to produce a small car. Specifically, the U.A.W. proposed a car about 170 inches in length, weighing about 2,000 pounds, with a small six- or four-cylinder engine that would get more than 25 miles to the gallon. In other words, the

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U.A.W. proposed a car almost identical in conception to the Datsuns, Toyotas, and Hondas now inundating America. Had Detroit heeded the U.A.W.'s advice then, it would now have the experience to meet and beat the small-car competition from abroad, rather than belatedly struggling to catch up. But it ignored the suggestion; in fact, it responded to Walter Reuther's presumption with a bold assertion of executive power meant to keep the union in its place and to protect the principle of managerial prerogative. In its contract with the U.A.W. in 1950, and in every contract thereafter, G.M. inserted a clause stipulating the "Rights of Management." It provided that "the products to be manufactured, the location of plants, the schedules of production, the methods, processes and means of manufacturing are solely and exclusively the responsibility of the Corporation."

WHEN SENSIBLE, small-car transportation became necessary after the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, Detroit was unprepared. By hooking the American consumer on far bigger and more powerful cars than were rational or necessary, Detroit became the victim of its own shortsightedness and masterminded its own collapse. Until 1955 Detroit had the U.S. auto market all to itself; foreign imports comprised less than 1 percent of sales. But in the late 1950s the U.S. was invaded by a horde of insects—the Volkswagen beetles. And between 1955 and 1960, foreign auto imports rose to nearly 7 percent of sales. Though opposed in principle to building small, inexpensive cars, Detroit management realized that it had to offer the American public something to offset the growing popularity of the Volkswagen, the other small European cars, and the initial flow of Japanese cars. So at the end of the 1950s Detroit introduced its own compact cars—the Plymouth Valiant, Ford Falcon, Chevrolet Corvair, and the like.

These practical American compacts sold well, and the foreign car tide began to recede. By 1965 imports accounted for a smaller share of the U.S. market than they had in 1960. But Detroit executives were so hooked on the big-is-beautiful formula that they said, in effect, "Well, we'll build these compacts if we have to, but they're going to be the biggest, widest, heaviest, most powerful, most expensive compacts the world has ever seen." Each year U.S. compacts got bigger, more powerful, more loaded with options, and more costly. The U.S. auto industry was so successful in building the world's biggest compacts that it eventually abandoned the small-car field altogether. Into this vacuum came the European cars again, and with them the Japanese—this time for keeps. Foreign imports rose from just 5.5 percent of sales in 1965 to 23 percent in 1970. With that kind of a foothold the imports now could not be dislodged. But if Detroit management had stayed with the compacts in the 1960s and redirected its advertising to wean Americans from the gospel of speed, power, and mayhem, the U.S. industry could have overcome or at least minimized the foreign car challenge, perhaps forestalled the protectionist tide, and might even have started exporting significant numbers of cars itself.

Friends of the U.S. auto industry like to argue that protectionism would never have become an issue if the working men and women who build the cars weren't so greedy. Detroit cannot compete with the Japanese, it is alleged, because American workers earn $8 an hour more than Japanese workers. Most objective observers agree, however, that the presumed $8-an-hour wage difference has been exaggerated and omits such things as the substantial housing subsidies Japanese companies provide for their workers. Although U.S. workers are more highly paid, wage differences between the U.S. and Japan probably amount to less than $500 per car, which is virtually offset by duty and the cost of shipping from Japan to the U.S.

Moreover, low price is not the reason foreign cars are selling here. In fact, foreign cars sold in the U.S., which years ago were cheaper than American cars, are now on the average more expensive than American cars. Commerce Department figures show that in the last quarter of 1981 the average selling price of an American car was $9,012, and the average selling price of a foreign car sold here was $9,318. Japanese companies are selling cars in this country primarily because they have the product, and they have the product because they've had long experience making it. American companies don't.

THE LESSON of Detroit's decline is clear: just as war is too important to leave to the generals, business is too important to leave to the managers. Detroit management has failed; their marketing strategy has been cynical and antisocial for at least a generation; their world view is obsolete. Until recently the idea of economic democracy—the participation of workers, consumers, and the public in corporate decisionmaking—was a radical, utopian dream. Today it may be an economic necessity.

The paradox of all this is that Detroit management's prime concern with the bottom line by selling big cars for big profits proved in the long run to be extremely unprofitable. Had saner voices among workers, consumers, and the public prevailed, a sensible automobile for urban America would probably have been produced decades ago, which might have saved the U.S. auto industry from its present debacle. Ironically, production for use would have been more profitable than production for profit.

A final note: recently Dodge management introduced a new small truck. They call it the Dodge *Rampage*. These guys will never change.

PAUL BLUMBERG

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Stockpile Shortfalls

If an international crisis shuts off U.S. supplies of metals needed for strategic products, such as cobalt for jet fighter engines, plans call for getting emergency supplies for as long as three years from 113 depots in fenced fields and vaults scattered throughout the country.

But political pressures and lack of vigilance threaten these stockpiles that are critical to our national industrial and military strength. The piles of materials in fact might not be there when needed. Or they might be of inferior grade.

The U.S. urgently needs to set up a better strategic minerals stockpiling system guided by clear, firm policy.

Some 61 families of minerals are crucial to the technologies that make America a great power. Yet the U.S. is a have-not nation when it comes to some of them. We rely on imports for more than half of our needs for 20 essential minerals.

Many come from unreliable countries or unstable parts of the world, posing the threat of an unpredictable and disdisastrous cut-off. We might be victimized by price squeezes or political blackmail, or become hostage to a "materials OPEC."

Despite these dangers, the U.S. has allowed the National Defense Stockpile to fall 60% short of its official goals.

Moreover, the government keeps some of the minerals in the wrong form. Take chromium, a metal vital to energy, chemical, aircraft, and other industries. We import all our supplies. And about half our stockpile is in the form of ore for which the U.S. lacks sufficient smelting capacity. That's like storing acorns when we need wood.

The quality of many stored metals is poor. About a third of the titanium and some of the tin in the stockpile have corroded. Some long-held metals are not pure enough for the exacting standards of today's high technology. Less than 6% of the cobalt is suitable for jet engines, for instance.

Presidents in the past have authorized large stockpile disposals to balance the budget and control inflation, without regard to national readiness. Congress and numerous agencies each claim bits and pieces of stockpile authority — the organizational chart looks like a jigsaw puzzle. Responsibility for both policy and day-to-day operations is diffuse and uncoordinated.

Congress should give taxpayers their money's worth in stockpile management. Our lawmakers could, for example, create an independent stockpile controlling body isolated from budgetary and political pressures.

Every provident family lays away part of its resources in some responsible way as a reserve in case of emergency. When it comes to strategic mineral resources essential to national security, our country should be no less prudent.

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Say hello to your Uncle Tip, me boy.

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

BY JACK BEATTY

HE'S A BIGGER MAN than he looks. The very bulk of him tends to hide this; as Jimmy Breslin once said, it is hard to believe anyone this fat could have anything to do with history. For a sophisticated public as obsessed with style as it is indifferent to character, there is something ludicrous about this flagrant Irishman, this guy with a nose like a busted plum who doesn't know that the boats have already left for the suburbs and now it's every man for himself. Conscience owes it to taste not to show up in a coat that looks like a tent flap, or to own a mug with the map of Ireland spread over it from jowl to sagging jowl. We'd like the boys at Virtue Central to send a sleaker emissary, but Tip's what we got. In truth, he is a lot better than we deserve.

Tip O'Neill is knocked for not being a whiz on substance, a visionary of the liberal future, or a deep thinker —in short, for not being the savior Washington journalists demand. More serious is the salient limitation of the breed: Tip O'Neill is a professional politician, and compromise is his profession. In such a man the urge to strike a deal is so habitual that it sometimes makes him cave in prematurely, as many liberals thought Tip did in the 1981 budget fight. A more equivocal limitation is that Janus-faced political virtue: loyalty. I think it was this—loyalty, trust—more than anything else, that made Tip support his pal Dan Rostenkowski's corporate Christmas tree tax bill in 1981. That was neither his nor the Democrats' finest hour. It was a violation of who he is and what he stands for. But more often, he is true to himself. Who he is and what he stands for is my subject.

In 1981, while the President was jamming through his tax and budget cuts over O'Neill's eloquent opposition, they were writing Tip off. In a letter to his constituents, Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin pictured Tip as out of touch, needing Les's help to find the elevator. In *Playboy*, James Wooten said that while Tip could "still get it up morally [oh, *Playboy*!] the talk in Washington now is that the Speaker is finished." A *Parade* cover story depicted Tip as a tired relic from a time before jogging. Twenty journalists dipped their pens in the same cliché, and for a month there you couldn't open the papers without reading about Tip's "last hurrah." On the Hill itself, John LeBoutillier, the punk Congressman from Long Island, sported a "Repeal O'Neill" button, while on the House floor freshman Republicans laughed openly at the Speaker.

It is a different story now. A lot of the laughers lost their seats in November; and as for the journalists, they are projecting their shallowness on more fitting figures. Tip was right in 1981: right morally in condemning the Reagan budget cuts as unfair, and right when he warned of the baneful economic effects of Reagan's "roya! tax cut." Listen to him, speaking from the well of the House on July 29, 1981:

> It is a terrible gamble. If it fails, the consequences for the nation will be horrible. Deficits will soar, inflation will persist, budgets will be cut. Amongst the casualties will be the Social Security program, health care and education programs, and possibly a reduced defense program.

He was right, but he was not successful, and losers get a condescending press. A year later this loser won the November elections; he shaped the Democratic Congressional victory.

He did it by letting the political time bomb of Social Security tick away for over a year, beginning just when the pundits were counting him out. In the 1980 campaign, Reagan had skillfully managed to deny what he had said in 1976: that Social Security should be made voluntary. But in April 1981, his political advisers made one of the greatest political miscalculations of recent years when they allowed the budget people to propose drastic cuts in Social Security, cuts that would reduce benefits for workers about to retire at 62 (see "Washington Diarist," page 43). When Tip O'Neill heard about these proposals, he must have blessed himself. It was one of those rare times when a man says to himself, Yes, there is a God, for He has delivered the Republicans into my hands. You don't make a mistake like this against an opponent like O'Neill. This man lives two doors down from where he was born in North Cambridge, and he knows people who are about to retire after thirty-five years on the loading dock of Schrafft's, knows how they have been counting on retiring at 62 as the work gets tougher every year past 50. Reagan had gotten away with attacking the poor, but now he had gone too far, and Tip O'Neill knew it.

The Democrats could not make the rising unemployment their big issue in 1982, for it was the rising unemployment in 1980 that, in Tip's view, cost Carter the election. They had baggage on unemployment. But Social Security? Here was a fresh issue, no Carter bag-

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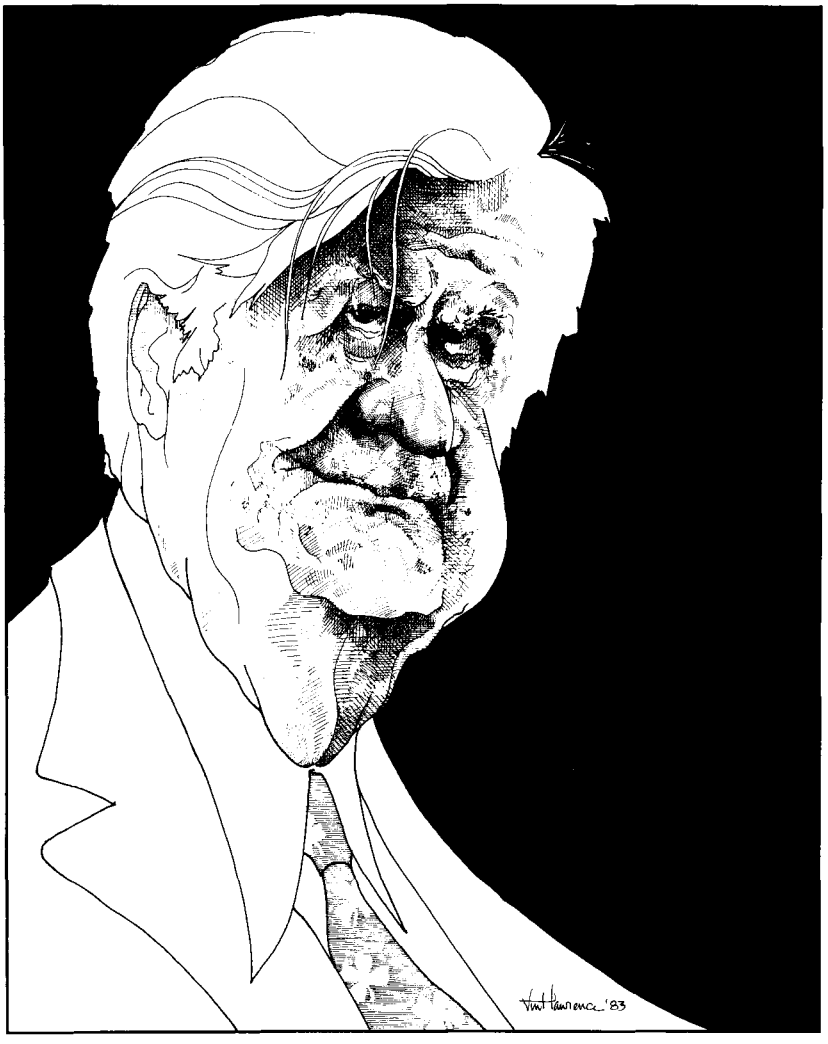
gage on it. With the Democratic caucus behind him, Tip denounced the proposals as "a breach of faith" with the first generation of Americans who had paid into the system their entire working lives, expecting to retire with full benefits at 62. He also passed the word to a House subcommittee chairman who was about to issue a report on ways to deal with the shortfall in Social Security: put the report on hold. And there it stayed, while editorialists denounced Tip for not dealing responsibly with the crisis. He didn't care. He will deal with it responsibly—will do so in the Congress just convening—but first he would use the issue to elect more Democrats. So while the editorials thundered, Tip kept reminding the voters that Reagan would do to the elderly what he had done to the poor unless they refused to stay the course. Last November, they refused. Exit polls showed that Tip's gamble had paid off, for two-thirds of the voters indicated that their greatest concern was the future of Social Security.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Victory—one sweetened by the defeat, among twenty-five other Republicans, of John LeBoutillier, who had called Tip "big, fat, and out of control." On him, Tip's 1981 comment is unimprovable: "I wouldn't know him from a cord of wood."

"All politics is local." You run no risk of being called a statesman by saying things like that. Nevertheless, that is Tip's philosophy, and it is not without profundity. To understand what it means, you have to understand something about the Eighth Congressional District of Massachusetts, and to understand the Eighth, you have to walk it—end to end, it would take you only a day—you have to walk through Brighton, Charlestown, the North End, Somerville, and Cambridge, and you have to know what manner of people live there. The first thing you have to know is that Tip is not the Congressman from Harvard; that venerable college occupies only a sliver of the District. Harvard would no doubt prefer a Representative with more polish, someone who didn't represent sweaty interest groups, like the unions. (Tip's father, then a bricklayer, was on strike against Harvard the day Tip was born.) But Cambridge is not Harvard; it is a blue-collar town made up of Irish and Italian and black neighborhoods, and that is about the composition of the rest of the district.

The Eighth has a scattering of industry—steel, chemical, candy manufacturers—but Boston is a commercial, not an industrial, city, and for many of Tip's constituents you either work for the Prudential or the John Hancock, the telephone company or the Boston Edison, or you work for one of the governments up there, and you have the federal, state, city, and county to choose from. And what your Representative does is get you a job "on," as the local phrase has it, one of those governments. Employment is his business. Thanks to the patronage of that great American, John W. McCormack, my father, for example, was "on the City of Boston"; and if I had not flunked the tests, I would have been "on the Edison" through those same good offices. So to a man like Tip O'Neill, who has represented these people for nearly fifty years, the public sector is not a despised abstraction. It is what generations in his district have risen through and relied on. It is what teaches the kids, those who don't go to the nuns, what patrols the streets, what puts out the fires. And this attachment to government employment by the Irish and Italians of Boston goes way back, back to the Depression, when State Rep. Tip O'Neill used to pass out "snow buttons" to constituents who had families to feed and weren't averse to shoveling the municipal snow to accomplish this. So when you tell a man like Tip O'Neill that jobs programs don't

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work, he is properly incredulous. Jobs programs built the Boston subways; they catalogued the Boston Public Library; they put the meat on Timmy Sullivan's bones so that, when the time came, he could do the necessary on Omaha Beach. Don't work? Why, a good many Boston Irish families survived the Depression thanks to the W.P.A., just as a saving remnant of the Irish race survived the Great Famine only by laboring on the public works of Ireland. You know a thing works when it saves you, or even if it gives your Uncle Dinny the cash to buy his teeth. It is one of the strong empirical tests.

WHEN TIP O'NEILL says that all politics is local, then, he is reflecting the folk wisdom of the Eighth: that government has a responsibility to maintain "work and wages" in a given locality and that, when numbers of people find themselves out of work, government should find work for them to do or train them for the work that exists. He means this and something else as well. Let's call it the ethic of solidarity.

In his sixteen years in the Massachusetts legislature, in his thirty years in the U.S. House of Representatives, Thomas P. O'Neill has been an organic politician.

> BEATTY: Mr. O'Neill, is it true that you are an organic politician?
>
> O'NEILL: Do I look organic to you? (*To aide.*) Who the hell is this guy?

Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I just meant that you're rooted in your constituency. In this Tip O'Neill could not be more different from his predecessor in the Eighth, John F. Kennedy, who knew more about the Solomon Islands than he did about Charlestown when his daddy bought the Eighth for him in 1946: and in this he could not be more different from Ronald Reagan, who was projected onto California by the movies. Irked by the progressive income tax, Democrat Reagan discarded his principles and his party like a used costume. Such inconstancy would be unimaginable in O'Neill. He is a stay-the-course type. It is not that he is a better man than Reagan—although I would bet myself broke before heaven on that proposition—but that his constituency sustains such virtue as is in him.

Recently *The Boston Globe*'s Mike Barnicle talked to some of O'Neill's constituents. John Ginigliano is a cobbler from Calabria who has known the Representative from Kerry for forty-five years:

> "Tip, he come inna my store and say he's run for the legislature and I say, 'Good, I'm with you.' I'm with him since then. He never change in all that time.
>
> "The stories I could tell you. The other week a woman comes in and says she don't got her Social Security. I say, 'Go see the Speaker.' She come back three weeks later, all happy. She say, 'John. I just got my check. God bless that Tip O'Neill.'
>
> "I got pictures of him all over the wall in my store. Last year, this lady's boy, he's in a retarded hospital. He wasn't getting good treatment or something, and I say, 'Go see the Speaker.' She come back later and says, 'John. My boy. He's happy. God bless Tip.' They all say the same thing: 'God bless Tip.' When the people say to me, 'John, I got a problem. It would take the President of the United States to take care of it'; I say, 'We got someone better. We got Tip.' He's for the people. He never forgets."
>
> What do you think when you see him?
>
> "What do I think? I think about how I know him all my life and the honor it is for me."
>
> Anything else?
>
> "Sure, he's an 11-E and I shine him good whenever my friend goes someplace important."

John Ginigliano collects messages in his North Cambridge shop; one of these, after congratulating Tip on his recent reelection, reads, "Thank God you didn't get rich. Then you'd be a Republican and we wouldn't have you. And we the ones who need you." (In North Cambridge, they even write with a brogue.) The lady, essentially, is right. Tip no doubt regrets having gone to a couple of parties given by Tongsun Park; and maybe if he had it to do all over again he wouldn't have sunk money into nursing homes that later applied for S.B.A. loans; and I personally hope he gets the occasional heartburn for supporting Rostenkowski's oil PAC tax bill in 1981. Nevertheless, the fact is he is one of the poorest members of Congress, and that is another way he stays close to the people of the Eighth. He made a little over $15,000 in speaking fees in 1981 and gave $5,000 of that to charity. Compare him to that sport Ronald Reagan, the rich man who gives peanuts to charity. Compare; and mark the difference between a mensch, as they don't say in North Cambridge, and a mannequin.

CLOSE TO HIS constituents, Tip still got way out in front of most of them on Vietnam; he was one of the first big-city Democrats to come out, in 1967, against the war. Vietnam put Tip in a conflict of loyalties. On one side was his President, his party, and his constituents, a large majority of whom supported the war. On the other side were his questioning kids, his skeptical intelligence, and his conscience—and they won. People who had never seen Somerville thought it was pressure from Harvard that pushed Tip on the war, and supposed he was a hero in the District. In fact he was scorned for his treason to President, party, and the sons of the Eighth who were doing their duty in Vietnam. Back in Washington, Lyndon Johnson called him on the carpet. My favorite version of what Tip said to L.B.J. is, "Mr. President, those are *Democrats* who are getting killed over there!" L.B.J. should have understood talk like that; what a pity he didn't. What a tragedy.

"*You guys came in like a bunch of pricks and now you're going out like a bunch of pricks.*" That's Tip, properly profane in a phone conversation with a shamefaced Jody Powell: it's election night and Jody has just told him that Jimmy Carter is going to concede while the polls are still open out West. Goodbye Frank Church; hello Steve Symms.

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"It is Tip's great misfortune," says a former House colleague of Tip's, "to have been Speaker under a weak Democrat and a strong Republican. If he had been Speaker under L.B.J., or Hubert Humphrey, you wouldn't recognize this country." Tip may feel some of this himself, but he is as loyal to Citizen Carter as he was to President Carter, and won't say anything against him. Carter was "a brilliant man," "the best informed President I have ever seen." Yet he was a President who could not "dialogue with the American people." Or, at first, with Tip O'Neill.

JOHN BRADEMAS, who was House Whip during the Carter years, says that Tip had to "educate" Carter, and tells of Carter listening patiently while Tip bluntly spoke his mind. Listening, but not hearing. After all, Carter had run against the professional politicians like Tip O'Neill. What could those bozos know about anything? Their advice had to be tainted—and so on. It could not have been easy dealing with such a man.

Another former colleague draws this scene. Carter has just delivered his energy-is-the-moral-equivalent-of-war speech, and Tip is congratulating him.

TIP: A fine speech, Mr. President. Now here's a list of members you should call, you know, to keep the pressure on. We need their votes.

CARTER: Tip, I outlined the problem to the people of the United States of America. It was rational, and my presentation was also rational. Now the American people are the most intelligent people in the entire world, Tip, and I am sure that when they and their Representatives think my program over, they will see that I was right.

TIP: Lookit, Mr. President. We need you to push this bill through. This is politics we are talking here, not physics.

CARTER: It is not politics, Tip, not to me. It's what is right and rational and necessary and practical and urgent that we do. . . . Say, did you like my sweater?

TIP (*later, to his Congressional colleague*): That guy is hopeless. It's gonna be a long winter.

Tip put his foot down, size 11E, when Carter tried to cut programs for the poor; said no to a balanced budget; no again to energy decontrol, unless the elderly got rebates to cover the higher costs. But mostly he worked hard for Carter, pushing the President's energy bill through in record time, and loyally carrying water for programs he did not believe in, like the Department of Education. He tried to talk Carter into wage and price controls; no dice. We got the Carter-Volcker-Reagan recession instead. And he gave Carter some good political advice: for example, that elections aren't won on foreign policy. Gradually Carter came to appreciate O'Neill. In his memoirs he even says he "loves" Tip.

O'Neill boasts that Carter cut federal employment by over 50,000 (those were bureaucrats, not constituents) and concedes that the Congress had overlegislated and overregulated, and needed to review and perhaps to rewrite some laws. But he doesn't buy the notion that Reagan's victory was a mandate for reaction. In Tip's view, it was the embryonic recession (Volcker again) that cost Carter the election. It was the first time since F.D.R.'s second term that a Democratic President had run for reelection during a recession, and Carter was no F.D.R. The way Tip figures it, you had blue-collar voters who had been battered by inflation, being laid off in 1980 and figuring, what the hell, maybe Reagan can do better—he can hardly do worse than that tight-fisted peanut farmer. You can't blame them, Tip says, but they were wrong. Wrong to desert the Democratic Party after all it had done for them—"made middle America." Wrong to vote for that movie star. Jesus, imagine!

"*Herbert Hoover with a smile.*" That's Tip's one-liner for Ronald Reagan. According to White House aide Michael Deaver, only two people get under Reagan's skin: Claude Pepper and Tip O'Neill. Still, there is at least a glow of warmth between them. The President called Tip on St. Patrick's Day, and he invited Tip to lunch to celebrate his birthday. That was a nice thing to do, and I can easily imagine it was the President's idea. The Speaker says the President tells a good Irish story (which from the hands-down Shakespeare of that genre is high praise) and knows nearly as much about sports as he does. So much for the civilities.

THE TROUBLE WITH REAGAN the man, the Speaker says, is the company he keeps. "He is surrounded by the rich. They're the only people the guy knows. He doesn't know any real people or any poor people; doesn't know how they live, what problems they face. He has absolutely no idea. He is from Hollywood." Sounds like he should talk to John Ginigliano.

As for the director of that black comedy, "Let a Smile Be Your Safety Net," on that subject the Speaker is a harsh tongue of truth. Reagan, he says, is presenting America with "a no-fault Presidency." "He is taking credit for the good news of the past twenty months and passing the buck to his predecessors for the bad." He compares Reagan's first two years with those of his Democratic predecessors: "Jack Kennedy increased the G.N.P. 8.2 percent in his first twenty months. Carter increased it 7.3. Lyndon Johnson increased it 6.8. Under Reagan, it's had its biggest decline since the war." Similarly with industrial production and housing. As for employment, there are probably more people unemployed or underemployed in the U.S., the Speaker says, than live in the whole of Canada. And the Administration is treating them real well, vetoing a $4-billion housing package that would have provided half-a-million jobs and 800,000 new homes, vetoing a supplemental appropriations bill because it included funds for an elderly jobs program, fighting a jobs training bill "until faced with the prospect of double-digit unemployment," and then threatening to veto a modest jobs bill passed by the Republican Senate. Yet the President

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asks the unemployed to "hang in there." "I think that is incredible and inexcusable."

In 1980, says the Speaker, the Democrats paid a high price for hard times, losing the White House, the Senate, and twenty-eight seats in the House. But, he says, "Republicans paid a high price for harder times in 1982. When I was nominated for Speaker in 1980, I promised that Democratic control of the House would not be used to obstruct the legislative process. We opposed his program but we gave the President his chance. We adapted to changed circumstances. Now it is his turn."

"The Speaker of the House is not a goddamned metaphor; I have never been a metaphor and, God willing, I never shall be." That is the inimitable Tip O'Neill, replying to a reporter who asked how he felt about being made a metaphor for passé liberalism by Republican TV ads. Tip is a force in the Democratic Party, its highest elected officer for the next two years; he is also King of the House, of which experts say he will rank with the great speakers, up there with Clay, Reed, Cannon, and Rayburn. And he is right; he is not a metaphor.

What he is, of course, is a symbol. At least that is what he has been for many of us these past two years: an inspiring symbol of the best tradition of the Democratic Party. When we look back on this low time, we will remember him denouncing this tax break for the rich, decrying that cut in aid for the poor. Some of us will even remember Tip admitting that, yes, he once did vote federal funds for research into increasing the height of dwarfs and being proud of it; and some of us were proud of it too and also of him. Especially proud when he would quote a passage from Hubert Humphrey's last speech, which he has on a plaque in his office and reads to visitors like Scripture. Heart-full proud when, with budget cuts for the vulnerable rushing through Congress in a blaze of carelessness, he would stand up and remind the House and the President and the people too of what they had forgotten: that "the moral test of a government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped." These people had need of protection these last two years, and in Tip O'Neill they had a tireless champion. He is a big man, all right.

Israel's president may try to step down to higher office.

PRIME MINISTER NAVON?

BY LOUIS RAPOPORT AND JUDY SIEGEL

Jerusalem

IN AN ISRAEL increasingly split by fundamental ideological differences, the opposition Labor Party is desperately seeking a leader who can replace Menachem Begin and "save Israel." It is no longer a struggle for Israel's physical survival; the country's armed forces are stronger than ever, and the country's borders are now secure. It is a struggle for Israel's integrity, and, some believe, for its very soul.

There is a widespread perception that the present Labor Party leadership simply won't do. The Israeli electorate is weary of retreads like Shimon Peres, Abba Eban, and Haim Bar-Lev. Peres's main rival, Yitzhak Rabin, is far more popular among the public, but he is unacceptable to most party members. There is a growing conviction that it is 61-year-old Yitzhak Navon, currently president of the State of Israel, a largely ceremonial post, who must become the next Prime Minister. In February—soon after he returns from his January 4-11 visit to the United States—Navon will announce whether he intends to remain in the presidency for another five-year term, forgo politics altogether and devote himself to writing, or answer the call to stand at the head of Labor, or of a broader Labor-led alliance that would challenge the Likud.

Polls show that Navon, who is little known outside Israel, is second only to Menachem Begin for the position of Prime Minister. In a recent *Jerusalem Post* survey, 18.4 percent said that Navon was best suited for the job. This was far behind Begin's 44.8 percent, but it dwarfed the rating of Labor's chairman, Shimon Peres, who had only 3.3 percent; and, unlike the other two, Navon hasn't even declared his desire for the country's top political post.

Still, Navon's image is that of a "Mr. Nice Guy," and there are doubts about whether this charming and soft-

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spoken man is durable enough to withstand the intense heat generated at the top level in Israeli politics—or ruthless enough to apply all the power a Prime Minister has at his disposal. Minister without portfolio Mordechai Ben-Porat says that when the president leaves his symbolic office, "he'll be naked, and he'll be open to attack." Navon himself says, "Political life in Israel is very brutal, replete with verbal violence. There is no comfort in political life, no style or sophistication. Rather than arguing against one's opponent with wit or satire, one hits back with violent words, ugliness, and coarseness, and blows beneath the belt." Peres reportedly told a closed meeting of party activists in November that Navon shouldn't become a candidate for Labor Party leader because he would be forced to sink in the mire of dirty party politics, and the party would be left no stronger than it is today. (Rabin, however, recently said that he would accept a third candidate, and that "I don't think I'll be the chief obstacle" to a Navon bid.)

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Navon was a protégé of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. The young writer and teacher had been "borrowed" from foreign minister Moshe Sharett to help Ben-Gurion read Cervantes's *Don Quixote* in the original Spanish. Ben-Gurion made Navon his political secretary, and from 1952 to 1963 he was the vigilant guardian of the Old Man's door, arousing the enmity of many whom he kept away. When the ruling party split in two in 1965, Navon followed Ben-Gurion into the political wilderness, and he was never forgiven by Labor Party leaders like Golda Meir for this "treachery." But Navon went on to become a key member of the Knesset for twelve years, and was voted a deputy speaker and chairman of its powerful Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. By virtue of his avuncular popular appeal, Navon was selected to host the Labor Party's election commercials on TV in the 1977 campaign. In April 1978, at the relatively young age of 57, Navon was elected by the Knesset to the post of president. Prime Minister Begin, though displeased with the prospect of a representative of the opposition serving as chief of state, bowed to public demand for Navon, abandoning the Likud's initial attempts to elect an unknown biophysicist of Sephardi origin.

Navon's own Sephardi and North African background is a plus in Israeli politics; Jews of similar background comprise over 50 percent of the population. He is the first Sephardi president, and has used the office to raise the self-esteem of Israelis of non-European origin, and to elevate their assessments of what they can achieve. Navon's paternal ancestors arrived in Jerusalem about 350 years ago from Turkey, where the family had sought refuge after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. His maternal grandfather, a rabbi and sage of Moroccan Jewry, came to Jerusalem with his wife and Navon's mother Miriam after the Prophet Elijah "appeared" in a dream and told him to go to the Holy Land.

Navon has written on Sephardi subjects since his first short story was published in 1944. His play, *A Sephardi Orchard*, a box-office hit in 1970, described his childhood in the courtyard of his Jerusalem neighborhood, where, he recalled recently, "no one was ever alone, not in his sadness and not in his joy. It was like a big family, with the fights and jealousy, but full of content. For children, it was a paradise."

Navon, the first "political" Israeli president (the post had previously been held only by eminent scientists and writers), has been criticized by Likud supporters for occasionally breaking out of the constraints of his office. But he has always been cautious about voicing his opinions, and he chooses his targets carefully. In Sep-

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tember, after Begin proclaimed that there was no need to investigate Israel's role in the Beirut massacre of Palestinians by Phalange Christians, Navon went on national television to call for an independent probe. "It is our duty to see to it that all that took place in this tragic chapter is examined quickly and thoroughly. . . . And if the results require it, we are duty bound to draw in full the conclusions emanating from this examination." Navon's call was widely acclaimed in Israel and abroad. But on the following day, Begin's Knesset majority voted down a proposal for a full judicial inquiry. A few days later, following a storm of protest, Begin changed his mind.

In a recent interview, Navon said that he would have taken the unprecedented step of resigning if Begin had allowed the Knesset decision to stand. "I didn't mean to dictate that there should be one kind of inquiry or another," he said. "I didn't sit with a stopwatch in hand. But I felt it was a matter of time, that the government would rethink its position. I didn't hint about resigning to anyone. I learned from Ben-Gurion never to threaten to resign. If you want to resign, do it." Navon added that he doesn't claim to be morally superior to anyone else. "But I think I do have a feeling for what the face of the nation should be, and not having an inquiry clashed with this conception. . . . The truth hurts less; it cleans the air."

Navon is disturbed by the growing polarization in Israel, but he believes it is inaccurate to label the two camps as "minimalist" versus "maximalist," hawks versus doves, the nationalist camp versus the peace camp. "Begin and Peres oppose each other, but both are for peace. It's a matter of peace at what cost. There are no warmongers here. There are disagreements on the policies of the State of Israel." But there are clear ideological differences as well, two visions of Zionism that were personified half a century ago by Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky and David Ben-Gurion. And if Navon runs for the premiership against Begin, the disciples of these two men will reenact the conflict between their two visions. Jabotinsky's followers in the pre-State period broke with the Labor Zionists over how to deal with bloody Arab attacks on Jews, and followed a policy of "retribution," while the Labor Zionist majority called for "self-restraint." Today the Likud camp, led by Menachem Begin (who calls Jabotinsky "our father and teacher"), takes a forceful posture toward the Arabs; the Labor movement believes in compromise and negotiation, and is more concerned with world opinion.

But the majority of Israelis, for the moment at least, reject the belief that there is a territorial solution to the Palestinian problem. The West Bank and Gaza, some observers say, have been annexed de facto by Jewish settlers and their supporters who believe in a "Greater Israel." Neither the religious nor the secular nationalists are prepared to discuss handing over parts of the "Land of Israel" in exchange for what they believe are vague promises of peace. They bitterly distrust those who believe that sovereignty of that part or all of the West Bank is negotiable. It is no surprise that hyperbolic epithets like "Bolshevik" (for Labor) and "fascist" (for Begin's followers) are once again being heard, or that one of today's most popular political insults is "traitor."

DURING HIS PAST four-and-a-half years in office, Navon has kept quiet about his views on the Palestinians and the West Bank. But in 1975, as a Knesset committee chairman, he said Israel should offer far-reaching concessions in exchange for a real and lasting peace. Two years later, he called for a Labor Party resolution expressing Israeli readiness to talk to Palestinian groups that would recognize Israel and accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. He opposed a Palestinian state, but asserted that "Israel will find it easier to plead its case if it appears flexible." In October 1980, when Navon paid a state visit to Egypt, the late president Anwar Sadat hailed him as a "messenger of peace and love." The two presidents got along superbly, conversing in Arabic, which Navon speaks fluently, and trading stories that Navon—a Hebrew University graduate in Islamic culture and language—had collected over the years.

Navon reads several Arab newspapers every morning, meets regularly with Israeli Arabs, and praises that sector of the Israeli population for their steadfast loyalty to the State despite provocation by the P.L.O. Although he makes de rigueur calls for Arab-Jewish dialogue, he is realistic about relations between Israel's 3.5 million Jews and its half-million Arabs. He quotes the remark of an Arab socialist and former member of the Knesset, Abdel Aziz el-Zouabi: "There is a war between my people and my country. My people are the Arabs, and my country is

CORRECTION:

Due to a typesetting error, several sentences in Leon Wieseltier's "The Great Nuclear Debate" (TNR, January 10 & 17) were garbled. The fifth paragraph on page 30 should have read: "The decision to deploy the Pershing and the cruise was based upon a sound understanding of the political dangers posed by the present military balance in Europe. The Soviet superiority in theater nuclear weapons threatens Western Europe with political domination or physical destruction, because it discourages the United States from coming to Western Europe's defense. In the event of a confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the Warsaw Pact can inflict upon NATO a nuclear blow for which NATO cannot retaliate in kind. NATO must rely, therefore, upon the nuclear capacity of the United States. The United States would have to choose, however, between a strategic nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union and the surrender of Europe."

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Israel." Navon says, "Fate has determined that both of us live together. So let us turn this fate into something pleasant, and live together in peace and prosperity." He says solutions can be found to the problems of employment and industrial development in Arab towns and villages. "But there are problems that can't be solved until the Arab-Israeli conflict in this region is resolved."

He describes the current troubled relations between Egypt and Israel as "a cold peace." A thaw is not possible until Israeli forces withdraw, along with other foreign armies, from Lebanon. The war broke out after the "acme in good relations between Israel and Egypt," and thus the deterioration in ties was a major shock. "The good relations were ushered in by Israel's evacuation of Sinai in April, as part of the peace treaty," says Navon. Egyptians praised Israel for what Sadat once called its "honor and faithfulness in keeping its word." "Then the war in Lebanon broke out and it all changed." Navon maintains that the Egyptian press went beyond legitimate opposition to the war. "All dams broke," he says, "and the press—often reverting to anti-Semitism—questioned Israel's very existence. The attacks on Israel could have all sorts of repercussions that the Egyptians may regret."

THE WORLDWIDE REACTION to Israel's invasion of Lebanon alienated many Western Jews from Israeli policies. But Navon says, "Diaspora Jews can't expect that we will make our policies only according to their own needs." The question is, does the Diaspora want to remain Jewish, loyal to their traditions and beliefs? These questions existed before the war and they will continue after the war. We Zionists seem to have something in common with the anti-Semites. They want to get rid of the Jews, and we want the Jews to come and live in Israel."

Navon is more tolerant of dissent within Israel. As president, he has regularly appealed for self-restraint, for a curb on verbal violence, and for respect for views that differ from one's own. He says, "The internal rifts in Israeli society—relations among the parties, between Orthodox and nontraditional Jews, between Ashkenazi [of European origin] and Sephardi [of Spanish, Asian, and North African origin] Jews—are more dangerous and more strained than they have been in ten or fifteen years." Following the Lebanon war, the internal strains have worsened considerably.

Navon resents stereotypical thinking about "the second Israel"—Jews originating mainly from Arab countries in North Africa and Asia. They cannot be pigeonholed as ultra-nationalist, anti-socialist and anti-Arab, he maintains. "Some say that Sephardim were persecuted by the Arabs; it was true in Iraq, but not in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Jews in Morocco didn't hate Moroccan Moslems." He denies that hunger for a tough stance against Arabs accounts for the switch of allegiance by many Sephardim to the Likud after decades of supporting Labor.

Navon declares that the turning point was the 1973 Yom Kippur War and its aftermath. People felt that Labor failed them on the two matters that particularly concern Israelis: military security and economic well-being. Labor placed people who had held top security posts—Moshe Dayan, Yigal Allon, Shimon Peres—in party leadership positions, "and Golda Meir too was regarded as the 'mother protecting her children.' " There was also a hint of personal scandal: "People said about Labor: 'You are cheaters, robbers!' I was involved in the election campaign in 1977, and I remember the use of those terms. And then the Prime Minister, Rabin, resigned because he and his wife held a foreign currency account in the U.S. in violation of regulations. This wasn't corruption, but it was against the law. The Labor alignment fell largely because of these reasons." In that 1977 election, the Sephardim, who had previously voted en bloc for Labor despite the harsh conditions of immigrant life, contributed to Labor's defeat.

Of the various schisms in Israel, the Sephardi-Ashkenazi rift is the least serious, according to Navon. His 46-year-old wife Ofira is Ashkenazi, and he notes that intermarriage between the two groups is now 21 percent, and increasing every year. "In another generation, there will be a good mix, and people will find it harder to differentiate. They won't be able to say, 'I earn less because I'm a Sephardi.' " In this matter the President may be a little too sanguine. Ethnic confrontation recently erupted in Tel Aviv, for example, where the shooting of a Sephardi youth provoked a wave of virulent anti-Ashkenazi sentiment. The "good mix" that Navon desires may not be easy to achieve.

NAVON'S U.S. TOUR will be carefully watched for signs of his decision about his future, and much will be made of the kind of reception Navon—a potential Begin rival—receives from President Reagan and other American officials. Navon denies the charge reportedly made by ministers in Begin's Cabinet that the trip is political in nature. "It will be a general conversation with President Reagan, based on consensus." He will receive an honorary degree from Johns Hopkins University and visit three Jewish universities, as well as meet extensively with American Jews about immigration to Israel and improving Jewish education.

Navon appreciates the obvious affection with which he is regarded by the Israeli man in the street, but he is well aware that this affection may dwindle if he joins the political fray. He was willing to run for the presidency in 1978 only after he was assured that no one would oppose him. But his urge to help change Israel's course could prove more powerful than his qualms about political office. Indeed, Yitzhak Navon seems to be a man who possesses "a profound inner faith, a supreme sense of mission, coupled by a sober perception of reality"—the words he once used to describe Anwar Sadat, the man who broke through the dark glass of mistrust in the Middle East.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Hoffman's Tootsie Role

Three weeks ago I was worrying that American film conditions might mean a future of little serious work and, at best, well-turned entertainment. The next two films to come along have nicely foxed me. *Sophie's Choice* struggles to be profound but, except for Meryl Streep's performance, collapses. Then *Tootsie*, which could be called an industry comedy, with Dustin Hoffman playing a man who plays a woman, turns out to be better than the allegedly serious film.

Tootsie
(Columbia Pictures)

Coup de Torchon
(Biograph International/Quartet Films/
Frank Moreno Co.)

All the portents for *Tootsie* were dire. First, there were reports in the trade press about script troubles. The final credits say that the screenplay is by Larry Gelbart and Murray Schisgal from a story by Don McGuire and Larry Gelbart, but it's rumored that other hands whittled at it, especially Elaine May. Then there were almost weekly war bulletins about battles between Hoffman and the director, Sydney Pollack. *Tootsie* acquired the prenatal atmosphere of a rapid-transit disaster. But it turns out to be a delight.

Does all this say something about the nature of American filmmaking, the chaos of multiple "input" and front-office pressure and star temperament and director conflicts and agent harassments? Of course it does. It says that chaos doesn't make bad work any more absolutely sure than virtual one-man control makes good work absolutely sure. (See the review following.) I've always been amazed, given the integral conditions of filmmaking, that Ingmar Bergman can get a film together; and when a good one comes out of the high-power conglomerate West-Coast womb, I feel the same amazement, extended. Chance plays a large part in the making of every film. More so in some films than in others, of course—least of all in the work of a director like Hitchcock who had absolute control and every smallest move blueprinted in his mind before he started. But filming is not just the million-monkeys-typing-until-they-produce-*Hamlet* thesis. Structures can be built, lost, and recovered, as can tonalities, if some sort of governing idea exists in the mind or minds of the governing figures. Not always, not even with the same people. Robert Redford and Sydney Pollack gave us the memorable *Jeremiah Johnson*. Redford and Pollack, plus a woman named Streisand, gave us the forgettable *The Way We Were*. There is no way to know: there is much reason never to believe. All one can do is, on the basis of the past, hope. On the one hand, ludicrously defying reason and spirit, are the conditions of filmmaking. On the other, there is a large treasury of films ranging from the good up to, at the peak, some of the best works of the century in any art.

Tootsie is somewhere in that treasury, certainly not near the top, certainly better than merely good. First of all, *Tootsie* is surprising—and not just because it's successful after all the prior hooha. It's considerably more than the laugh-getter that it seems to be at the start and continues to be. Hoffman is a New York actor named Michael Dorsey who also teaches acting because he can't get enough acting work. (This was once true of Pollack.) Chances for acting jobs are scarce enough, but Michael has extra troubles because he has a mind of his own. (For instance, he loses a job as a tomato in a TV commercial because he's told to sit and he doesn't believe that vegetables sit.) Thus he has troubles with his agent, played by Pollack (with whom Hoffman was having troubles off screen as director). Dorsey dresses as a woman to get a part in a soap opera, calls himself Dorothy Michaels, gets the role, and makes a hit—particularly because Dorothy insists on discarding the pasteboard dialogue of her role and speaking as the woman that she is!

Two main complications follow from the impersonation. Michael falls in love with Jessica Lange, who is a leading woman of the soap and of course knows Michael only as Dorothy. Lange's father, Charles Durning, a widower living in the country, falls in love with Dorothy and gives her an engagement ring, asking her to think it over. So a young man dressed as a woman loves a young woman whose father falls in love with the impersonated woman. It's further complicated because Lange loves Dorothy as a friend but declines to see her privately anymore because, after a gaffe by Michael in the heat of passion, she thinks that Dorothy has lesbian feelings which Lange simply can't reciprocate.

It's a well-machined farcical setup, buttressed with tributary subplots which I won't detail. And some of it is played excellently by Hoffman sheerly as farce. For instance, after Dorothy is hired for her role, the woman producer takes her to her dressing room. The door opens, and there is a gorgeous girl in skimpy bra and panties, an actress also using that dressing room, who greets Dorothy with outstretched hand. Hoffman does no Bob Hope "takes": in a splinter of a second, you can see him leave the laughs to us, as Michael senses immediately that he must play Dorothy even more strenuously. Michael's split-second summoning of extra determination is funnier than any "take" could have been.

This and other sequences work varia-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Gandhi. Not boring. That negative statement is needed to wipe away dreads. Splendid acting, plus adequate direction, make this long (though synoptic) biography vivid.

Smithereens. Susan Seidelman's first feature, about the SoHo rock scene, goes past glib naturalism to a unique vision.

Sophie's Choice. Meryl Streep is excellent, if a shade conscious of it. The rest—actors, script, direction—doesn't overly impede her.

The Verdict. Paul Newman all the way. Sidney Lumet has directed with a knowledgeable eye, the story of a drunken lawyer's comeback is good enough, but it's Newman all the way.

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tions on some of the situations in that farce masterpiece, *Some Like It Hot*, but *Tootsie* goes beyond farce. It uses the mechanism of its farcical situation to move it much closer to social comedy. The subject is sexuality, not homosexuality, which it was in Blake Edwards's polished farce, *Victor/Victoria*, where the old queen played by Robert Preston was the Rosetta stone of the tangle. No, *Tootsie* grows to Michael's realization, through his female impersonation, of at least some of what it's like to be a woman, a realization that depends on his successful impersonation but goes far beyond it. As soon as he "becomes" Dorothy, he can't stand the male-inspired dialogue that Dorothy is given; he resents the fact that the macho director calls all the male actors by name but calls the women Honey or Tootsie. In short, by playing Dorothy in order to get work, Michael learns what it is to be a Dorothy, working.

And in short, out of all this, *Tootsie*, turbulently born, is healthy, organic, funny first and last, moving, and disturbing. Pollack has directed briskly, without any of the occasional intrusive touches that marred even his best work (*Jeremiah Johnson*, for instance), and he plays the actor's agent with hairy-knuckled, smoothed-out, third-generation, push-cart push. Lange is competent, as is Durning. Bill Murray is at last tolerable, as Michael's playwright roommate who is in on the ruse from the beginning. (But how did that pair afford a loft as large as the one they're in? In Manhattan today?)

Sometimes Hoffman's work, as Michael, is deceptive; he makes it look easy, loafing, leaning against cars and bars. But everything is finely tuned, planned to a needlepoint spark. As Dorothy, his ease is different: not in apparent loafing but in the seeming facility with which he completes the transformation—of movement, voice, and sensibility—without any trace of swishing. Michael, the actor, wants to understand Dorothy, the woman; and Hoffman understands both of them. Hoffman's powers of transformation have been startling since 1966 when, at twenty-eight, he played a fortyish nineteenth-century Russian office drudge in the off-Broadway *Journey of the Fifth Horse;* and his gift for bright farce performance came clear soon after, in the off-Broadway production of *Eh?* Since his smashing film debut in *The Graduate*, he has done his share of bad films and has ambled through some better ones, like *Papillon*. But there's never been any reason to doubt that Hoffman carried great gifts within him no matter what he was doing, and in *Tootsie* he uses them well. Endearingly.

To see within a few weeks Paul Newman in *The Verdict*, Meryl Streep in *Sophie's Choice*, and Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* is to be permitted some pride in American acting: and in its ability to triumph over American filmmaking conditions.

Contrariwise, Bertrand Tavernier's *Coup de Torchon* (*Clean Slate*) is as close to a one-man operation as the innately conglomerate condition of filmmaking can come. And it's not very good. Tavernier, director of *The Clockmaker* and *Let Joy Reign Supreme* and *The Judge* and *The Assassin* and *A Week's Vacation*, has established past question that he is an artist of high, ambitious quality. He has also established that, like all such artists, he can make mistakes (*Spoiled Children*). Sole control doesn't guarantee prevention of mistakes any more than committee control guarantees commission of them.

Coup de Torchon, based on an American novel by Jim Thompson, is set in French West Africa in 1938. The script is by Tavernier and his much-older collaborator Jean Aurenche. Several times their scripts have been beautiful, but with a tendency to demonstration of ideas; this time the script is lax, with even more explicit demonstration. The approach of Hitler and World War II is felt even in this dusty little African town, and we get a small morality play about Fascism: how a lazy, fornicating policeman, who is the whole police force, is transformed into a lazy, fornicating, tyrannical murderer.

The script manages to be both predictable and insufficiently motivated. Philippe Noiret, the policeman, does something rare in his career: he is willing to let his jowls and belly act for him—simply to be present and to rely on his presence. The beautiful Stéphane Audran is also present, to no avail, as his two-timing wife. Isabelle Huppert is Noiret's other woman and, though she's more lively than usual, she's still uncompelling.

Tavernier likes to try odd corners of experience and possibility. This time he put as much fervor into a poor choice as he has put into good ones. All right, that's that. Onward.

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ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Another Theater Obituary

The rotund smiling face of T. Edward Hambleton beams out from the columns of a *New York Times* article announcing the closing of the Phoenix, the theater he helped create over thirty years ago. Al-

Hamlet
by William Shakespeare

though it is rare when the good-natured face of Mr. Hambleton is not lit up with smiles, the photograph is not appropriate to the occasion. The extinction of an organization into which he poured so much energy, so much of his own money, and almost half his life, must have struck him like the loss of a close and beloved friend.

Many of us will share in his mourning. Looking over my reviews of Phoenix productions since I began at THE NEW REPUBLIC in 1959, I realize I haven't liked many of them—but I never doubted the value of the institution as a whole. Part of this value was to function as a barometer of the changing fortunes of the New York theater. Created by Hambleton in 1953 with Norris Houghton, the Phoenix first started life in a spacious house on 12th Street and Second Avenue, once the home of a proud Yiddish theater. The Phoenix had its successes in the 1950s—Tyrone Guthrie's flashy *Six Characters*, a Redgrave-directed *Month in the Country*, and *Once Upon a Mattress* (Carol Burnett's debut)—but it was not until its 1959-1960 season that the Phoenix collected together a permanent company of actors to do plays from the classical repertory. In the same year, the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater was being formed, Joe Papp was developing a strong Shakespeare ensemble in Central Park, and a troupe known as the Association of Producing Artists (A.P.A.), under Ellis Rabb's direction, was touring the provinces, before settling down for a short stay at the Folksbiene Theater with a repertory of three plays.

It was the first flush of the repertory fever that was to infect New York in the 1960s, with many of the same conservatory-trained actors shutting among the various companies. I remember the Phoenix troupe with affection (I acted with some of its members): Fritz Weaver, Gerry Jedd, Ray Reinhardt, John Heffernan, Patricia Falkenhain, Franklin Cover, Juliet Randall, many more. Trying its first unsteady steps under the direction of Stuart Vaughan, it stumbled a bit over Ibsen and Shakespeare, but it never had time to recover its balance. In another year, the company had disintegrated and Hambleton abandoned his 12th Street home.

Hambleton's continuing commitment to repertory, however, led him in 1963 to integrate the Phoenix management with the artistic staff of the A.P.A. (in the 1950s, the Phoenix was briefly joined with Stratford's American Shakespeare Festival), with the new junta playing first at an off-Broadway house on 74th Street and then at the Lyceum Theater on Broadway. The A.P.A.-Phoenix fought gamely at the Lyceum for six years, finally forced to surrender to the fact that Broadway repertory was a financial impossibility. The fizzle of the cultural explosion was followed by the thump of the recession and the collapse of other ambitious New York-based repertory companies (the most embarrassing being the Vivian Beaumont, which kept changing purpose and management until it achieved its current manifest destiny as a construction site). At this point, the Phoenix began to improvise, moving from theater to theater, from policy to policy, in search of a workable identity. But Hambleton's struggle for survival was never expedient, and he continued to build his hopes around promising young talent. Meryl Streep, for example, played her first New York role as a sensual three-hundred-pound slattern in a Phoenix production of Williams's *Twenty-Seven Wagon Loads of Cotton*, and Hambleton continued to offer initial New York opportunities to relatively unknown British, European, and American writers, including Chris Durang and Wendy Wasserstein.

The history of the Phoenix is not that of a great or distinguished theater, but it had a valuable place in our culture, and I'll miss it. Along with the Manhattan Theater Club, the Circle Rep, and, more recently, Playwrights Horizon, the Phoenix has been part of the recent institutionalization of the off-Broadway movement, which, if it has lost much of its experimental function to off-off-Broadway, has filled an important Broadway vacuum by delivering competent, professional, semicommercial fare. At present, the Phoenix squats in its own ashes, unlikely to rise again, shut down as a result of falling subscriptions, declining subsidies, some bad reviews, i.e., the theatrical plagues of the 1980s. Hambleton correctly sees his problem as typical. "It's not just us alone that are in this trouble," he told an interviewer. "This is a reflection of the temper of the times." To judge by the yawns that greeted the recent failure of the company at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the collapse of the Phoenix will not be greeted with much alarm in theatrical circles, but if its fortunes continue to typify the condition of our theater culture as a whole, as they have in the past, then you can confidently expect a few more obituaries from me in the future.

I'M LATE in reviewing Joseph Papp's latest production (his fourth) of *Hamlet* at the New York Public Theater, but I confess I just don't know what to make of it. Jan Kott has called this work a sponge, insofar as it invariably soaks up the problems of the time in which it is produced. If so, Papp's *Hamlet*s have largely been an effort to squeeze out contemporary juices. In the 1960s, he offered us an Anti-*Hamlet*, which resembled nothing so much as a trashing of the play by the S.D.S.; in the 1980s, he is staging the play for a convention of feminists.

Or so it seemed when he first announced his decision to cast a young woman in the title role. Upon hearing of this plan, I considered it a stunt, but at the first appearance of Diane Venora in black boots and schoolboy's tunic, buttoned up the front, I thought it just might work. Vaguely catatonic during Claudius's speech, then breaking out into tears of mortification during the first soliloquy, whining and mewling and groveling on Robert Yodice's beige marble floor, this Hamlet seems to be a highly precocious Victorian whiz kid, who won early admission to Wittenberg College on the basis of extraordinary S.A.T.s, and then managed to get an accelerated B.A. in less than two years.

For what Venora attempts is not a feminist number on macho animals, but rather a serious effort at male—or rather adolescent—impersonation. Instead of being more tender and compassionate than the usual interpreta-

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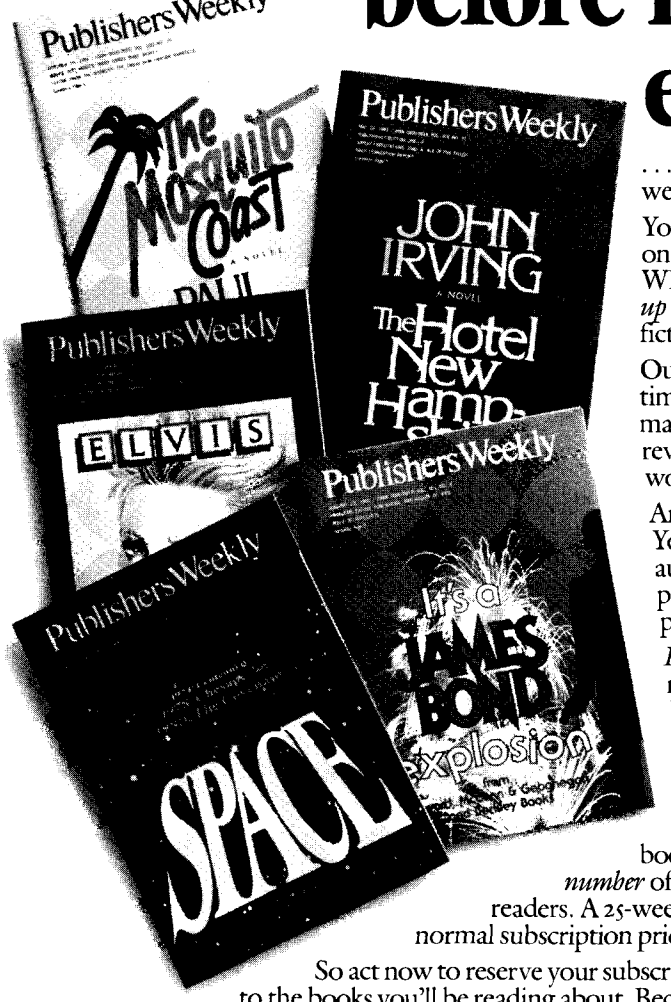

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tions, Diane Venora's Hamlet is as cold and vicious and merciless a little wretch as ever stalked the halls of Elsinore. He stabs holes in Polonius without a hint of remorse, throws Ophelia's "remembrances" in her face, punches his mother out with jabs to her face and kidneys, handles Yorick's skull with the loathing of a kid who has been asked to eat it for breakfast, and throws temper tantrums on the slightest provocation. Rather than sharing Hamlet's pain, you feel like kicking his little bottom for being disrespectful to his elders.

Now, to treat Hamlet as a snotty teenager is, at least, an interpretation, wrongheaded though it be, but it doesn't take long to realize that it's not a conscious directorial choice. For unfathomable reasons, Hamlet's "fellow-student," Horatio (sympathetically played by James Cromwell), is cast old enough to be in the grip of a midlife crisis, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern look more like uncles than buddies. The fact is that Papp has brought no specific ideas to this production, and, once having cast Diane Venora, puts her under no other obligation than to speak the lines clearly. This duty she discharges, in a strong contralto voice that tends to turn iambic rhythms into spondaic drawls (thus extending an already long four-hour evening), while sounding from time to time like a hoarse Italian housewife yelling at her kids through the window. In Miss Venora's reading, we hear the play—all of it in this virtually uncut version—but we don't learn much about the character's depth or intelligence or anguish.

Papp has created a clean nineteenth-century look for the work, with Allen Shawn's music providing mostly fanfares and alarums, but he hasn't much helped his actors. You'd expect Bob Gunton to waltz through the part of Claudius; instead he sleepwalks through it, creating problems for the gifted Kathleen Widdoes as Gertrude, who doesn't know whether to kiss him or wake him. No real feelings are expressed on the stage, with the exception of a savage conflict between Hamlet and Gertrude, which makes the brutal closet scene the high point of the evening, indeed the only one in which Hamlet expresses any kind of emotion. Papp no doubt loves this play; he just seems to have run out of ideas about it. Perhaps he thinks he's discharged his responsibility simply by putting *Hamlet* on the stage. Considering the present state of the New York theater, he may just have a point.

THE POET AS PUBLIC MAN

Letters of Archibald MacLeish, 1907 to 1982 edited by R. H. Winnick

(Houghton Mifflin, 471 pp., $20)

Archibald MacLeish was a "public" man of letters, supremely conscious of his civic role. From his birth in Glencoe, Illinois, until his death almost ninety years later, his life stretched out like a procession. A good part of it was acted out in the limelight of history. Lawyer, poet, librarian, bureaucrat, journalist, diplomat, publicist, professor, critic—his published work was largely taken up with what he called "poetic and political and economic and moral issues." The same can be said for this collection of letters evenhandedly chosen and edited by his authorized biographer, Mr. R. H. Winnick.

It is taken for granted these days that all the writings of an eminent literary figure are privileged property of the public. Privacy ends with death. Yet sometimes the dead need protection from themselves, and one wonders whether MacLeish would have welcomed the posthumous exposure. An autobiography, had he written one, might have been more self-serving than these letters. So far as it is known, he never assessed his career at length or subjected any phase of it to special scrutiny, save guardedly in his verse. His letters contain few passages of critical self-examination, but they inadvertently reveal (and not always flatteringly) a sequence of his changing selves. They show him tacitly abandoning the meaner social attitudes of his class and times as he encountered American specimens he never met at Hotchkiss or Yale. The young man who complained to his friend, Dean Acheson, of "an atmosphere of stinking breath, meat-market odors and a haze of garlic" at a "Russian meeting" in Boston's Faneuil Hall and who "plotted pogroms," outgrew his biases and himself became the target of bigots. But the "education" of Archibald MacLeish hardly followed the course of Henry Adams's New Englander who, in MacLeish's paraphrase, distrusted his own judgment and totally repudiated the world's. MacLeish did neither. A social and unalienated man emerges from the letters: affectionate and generous, happy in fellowship, fearful of rebuff, vain and thin-skinned on occasion, always comfortable with power. And beneath the shifting personae of the letter-writer (dutiful son, devoted husband, dedicated poet, man of affairs) is an integral personality.

Yale University helped to shape it. New Haven ("wine to my blood") intoxicated him, and the spell lasted well beyond his graduation. In 1918 he wrote to Yale's president from France, where he had a whiff of war: "I have let myself come to confound all America with Yale." Although he later switched his loyalties to heterodox Harvard, memories of college friendships and triumphs, the Yale ideal "that beauty is attainable, that the world of the mind is real, that men are in nature seekers of the true god—whatever name they call him by," permanently abided. The poet John Peale Bishop detected the "Yale taint" in MacLeish, and so did the irreverent other Princetonian, MacLeish's unforgiving enemy, Edmund Wilson.

Yale must have nurtured MacLeish's evangelical propensities, but possibly his mother, a deeply religious woman and the recipient of his most confessional letters, was more responsible for turning her son into a secular priest. Whatever the cause, there is something inveterately sermonical in his letters. He had an impulse to preach, to vouchsafe, even when writing to members of his family or in some of his artfully composed condolence messages that seem addressed not only to the sufferers but also to an unseen audience. He was given to apostrophes and rhetorical flourishes, a habit he deplored and gradually learned to control. At a very young twenty-four he announces: "I shall never attempt poetry till there is in me a great truth crying to be *preached*. . . . Art that exists for its form merely is a painted harlot." At fifty-two, the then-assistant secretary of state for public and cultural relations remarks to his mother: "I seem to be coming around backwards by a kind of literary and political circle to the pulpit! . . . Many of my recent speeches . . . are more like sermons than anything else." In a sense, the lay preacher never left the pulpit. Something of the young Levite shines through his correspondence with the boozers and

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devotees of Nada of the Paris years; the expletives and tough-talk sprinkled through his letters to "Pappy" Hemingway and "Ezry" Pound lack the authentic music of vulgarity.

He had set out for France in 1923 after deciding to forsake a safe career in a prestigious law office and to become a poet. In the next five years spent almost entirely abroad, he worked at his craft and acquired a literary reputation. Yet it is plain—if not from his own letters to T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, Allen Tate, John Peale Bishop, Wyndham Lewis, and the like, at least from the references to him in their letters to each other—that they could not wholeheartedly accept him as one of their own. Tentative in his approach to these writers, "continuously laudatory" (as Allen Tate described MacLeish's letters), and at times embarrassingly imitating their distinctive mannerisms, he relished his intimacy with this hypercritical and censorious company while they never quite believed in his gifts.

Perhaps they did not consider him a genuine free-lance professional. Although hardly rolling in dollars, the MacLeishes managed to live pretty comfortably in Paris, and he was sufficiently well fixed not to have had to flog his literary wares to survive. Perhaps his friends were put off by someone so well inured to the climate of responsibility. In any event, MacLeish, who had opened his heart to them, was shaken by what practically amounted to a collective dismissal: they granted his "technical excellence" but declared him an imitator, a "false" poet.

THIS CHARGE hurt and puzzled him. Admittedly, he acknowledged to Pound, he had started to write poetry too late. Pound had "perfectly exposed my malady." He would not agree, however, that he had no voice of his own. He may have used other poets' "forms" (this to another), but he insisted "the experience I thought was mine, the emotion mine, the poetry mine." Eliot, under whose spell he had half-resentfully fallen, had opened a world to people like himself "which we recognize at once as our own." He was spared the knowledge of Eliot's opinion of him, but he suffered (he wrote to Bishop) from the felt predicament of being the "man who can only live by expression and who finds himself already expressed." MacLeish weathered the critical blasts from the "bright boys," as he came to refer to them, but he could

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never see why a poem got better marks when all traces of influence were obliterated and why it was damned when they were visible. If the first task of a poet, he told the persistently critical Tate, was to destroy "the Romantic personality," re-establish "the distinction between the workman and his work," learn and serve "*his metier*," then he knew his verse was not counterfeit.

By the mid-1930s, the urge to *serve*, to preach, to "bear witness" took over, and for the next thirty years he tried to convey in his poetry the emotional passion he found wanting in Eliot, Pound, and Auden. He now conceived of the Poet as "God's spy," of knowledge, books, techniques—even beliefs and convictions—as so much scaffolding. "We must begin with what we are," he proclaimed, "which is what we teach and sense and see and guess and dream." Only what was loved was truly seen. Hence he came to deplore the "shrunken witnesses" who may have written poetry of "great and lasting beauty" but were nonetheless "models of skillful and withering heartlessness." MacLeish was getting back at the "masters" who had dominated the "hurricane-center void and emptiness and calm of the 1920's," in effect repudiating his repudiators. The Depression and the totalitarian challenge, he wrote to Van Wyck Brooks, made "true things true again the way the flat white light before a storm shows all the shapes and contours of the earth."

Since his return from France in 1928, the author of these affirmations had thrown himself into public affairs and studied America ("She's a tough land under the corn mister") as an editor of *Fortune*. He espoused "the classic American tradition of democracy as the only form of government which offers intellectual and personal freedom and responsibility to an adult human being." To the Communists he was "Der Schöne Archibald," the "social fascist," and Eliot's "stooge"—that is until 1935 when the *New Masses* forgave his slurs, printed his forcible-feeble anti-Nazi poem, "The German Girls! The German Girls!" and packed the third and last performance of his play, *Panic*. The "Comrades," he wrote to Carl Sandburg at this time, knew "very little about America," but they were "honorable and brave men and disinterested men." He willingly shared platforms with spokesmen of causes he did not entirely agree with and kept the favor of the left until events in Spain and Munich convinced him that the best defense against Fascism was a "pro-democratic policy." Poets "as political animals" could not escape their duty to serve if need be as pamphleteers and propagandists.

In 1953 MacLeish briefed the provost of Harvard on his past association with left-wing groups: "My position was, in brief, that a man who would not declare his convictions for fear of declaring them in the wrong company had no convictions." He skated over some of the details of his involvement, but it was an honest and just statement and one not belied by his casual connections with some Communist front groups. He was an ardent nationalist before Pearl Harbor. To impugn his patriotism, as the right-wing columnists and, later, Senator McCarthy tried to do, was sheer demagoguery.

According to Mr. Winnick, MacLeish's Washington career in the 1940s was probably launched by a much-discussed piece he wrote in 1941, "The Irresponsibles," in which he blamed the 1920s' writers for failing, as he put it some years after, "to see that the second World War was not the first all over again and that Fascism *had* to be stopped." In fact his manifesto went much further. Conceding the "great skill, integrity, and devotion" of old friends like Hemingway and Dos Passos, he still accused them of inculcating in the young a belief that all moral convictions were fraudulent and thereby leaving the country morally defenseless in the battle for men's minds. World crises provided him a pulpit from which he felt obliged to "bear witness" against the cynicism of the Edmund Wilsons to whom all such declarations were "awful collectivist cant."

But the letters confirm the sincerity of MacLeish's rhetoric and the seriousness with which he took his role of "restoring a poetry of public speech." He believed in his mission to awaken "both those who think and those who do not think," and his admitted hunger for fame in no way vitiates the honesty of his motives. If his social ties as well as his opinions helped to make him the poet laureate of Capitol Hill, he influenced the influentials—Felix Frankfurter, Dean Acheson, Henry Luce, Adlai Stevenson, McGeorge Bundy, to name only a few—and was never overimpressed by men of power. The most eloquent of his letters during the war and thereafter are often hortatory: they chide and warn and prophesy. "Freedom," he reminds his Yale crony, Luce, "is not a *possession* to be *defended*.

GROUNDS

Just ribs, the greenhouse floods
with milky-nurturant air—
chambered nautilus laid open,

child's roar of ocean spiralled
down nursery floor. Forgetfulness
sweeps up broken flower-pots,

upended cakes of dirt tipsily celebrating
dry years to come, beetles feasting on abandon—
as if again, beneath palms arranged in choirs,

winter lettuce and voluptuous orchids grow
for the mansion, the mansion that isn't there.
Candles flowering in fingerbowls,

pheasant breast sliced on gold-leafed platter,
creamy napkin blotting reddened lips—
Sister, the math is simple:

in houses of the stories that offered escape
from the childhood we called dull,
we would have been the servants,

the view from our attic room
over the master's fair prospects
a calendar's scene, grander lives built

from engravers' cross-hatched days
the way mortals appear on paper money,
ageless faces just lines

green as the lawns their gardeners rolled,
as the limes they had pleached down the path
to the mausoleum. Its marble glows

the dirty white of bones, of bells
of the bindweed that ropes columns,
beginning its own currency

unchecked by the demands of fiction.

DEBORA GREGER

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. . . not something you *have*; it is something you do." If we believe Communism can only be answered by planes and guns, he writes to Stevenson, and if we

> determine our relations with other peoples on the basis of their willingness or unwillingness to line up on our side of a future war against Communism, we may very well wake up a generation from now to find that history has passed us by . . . and that we are no longer a dynamic and creative force in the world, a great nation.

The Librarian of Congress, the Director of the Office of Facts and Figures, the State Department official, the UNESCO organizer, the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard—if not always the private poet—was adequate to all occasions.

When MacLeish was a young man, he stopped speaking to his Aunt Mary after she bluntly told him that in renouncing the law for poetry, he was throwing away a chance to become a first-class lawyer in order to become a third-class poet. He turned out to be a much better poet than she predicted, certainly a more successful one. Still, the letters he wrote as a public man seem to carry a greater force and authority than his purely literary correspondence. The tribune for art and artists knew his way around the Washington corridors. In orchestrating the efforts of Eliot, Hemingway, Tate, Frost, and others to spring Ezra Pound (whose opinions he loathed) from St. Elizabeth's Hospital, and in speaking up for Malcolm Cowley under fire from Westbrook Pegler and Martin Dies, he was bestowing favors, not seeking approval. In short, he was firmly in his element however much he complained that public service and journalism left him insufficient time to write poetry.

Age and fame brought out the best in him. The rancor and bitterness that tinged some of his early letters, the scars from the goring inflicted upon him by Edmund Wilson's wicked parody, "The Omelet of A. MacLeish," faded with the years. As his poetic reputation subsided, he rededicated himself to poetry and teaching. Some of the most ingratiating and pleasing letters in this volume are those addressed to students and young poets he admonished and encouraged.

DANIEL AARON

Daniel Aaron, professor of English at Harvard University, is president of the Library of America.

COMRADE BRIBE

USSR: The Corrupt Society by Konstantin M. Simis

(Simon and Schuster, 316 pp., $14.95)

During a recent visit to the Soviet Union, many of my conversations—with waiters, taxi drivers, plumbers, electricians, engineers, technicians, scientists, shop attendants, psychiatrists—were about money. First they'd ask me how much I made. Then I'd ask them. Then I'd check the stores to see how much things cost. Then I'd ask them how, on their salaries, they could afford to live, and how, given all the lines and scarcities, they could satisfy their ordinary needs. Some didn't tell me. Others, though, did: *nalevo*, "on the left."

In *USSR: The Corrupt Society*, Konstantin Simis tells us what life is like on the Soviet left. He should know. As a practicing Soviet lawyer, Simis defended many of the country's underground millionaires, as well as those who got into trouble with authorities for refusing to participate in official corruption. And, as a staff member of the Institute of Soviet Legislation, which was responsible for, among other things, drafting the country's new constitution, he met persons at the highest levels of government who told him of the ways in which much of the government business was really carried out.

As it happens, the original manuscript for the book was found by the K.G.B., which confiscated it and invited him to emigrate. The fact that his wife is Dina Kaminskaya, a lawyer who defended some of the most famous dissidents, probably made expulsion all the more attractive to those whose daily life Simis describes. He and his wife left in 1977, an earlier draft of his manuscript having already been smuggled out.

In the main, Simis tells us, the country runs on bribes. Judges take them. Police take them. And politicians take them. In many spheres of daily enterprise, Simis observes, little can be accomplished without slipping somebody something. And not just for personal gain. If you want a fair trial, Simis points out, you often have to pay a judge to get it. If you want the factory you manage to get its allotted and rightful delivery of raw materials, you sometimes have to pay an official to get it. And if you want to get a grade in an examination that will qualify you for entry into a university or institute, you may have to give the examiner something, even if you deserve that grade.

The source of much of this corruption, Simis believes, is the structure of Soviet governance. Though there's a formal state apparatus, it's subservient to the Communist Party apparatus. Neither the subservience, nor the existence of the Party apparatus itself, is anywhere written into Soviet law; but their reality is everywhere acknowledged. And, just as the Party's real power is not derived from law, neither, Simis says, do its leaders and bureaucrats respect the law. For anything to get done, Party officials must agree. And for their agreement, money is not infrequently a suitable incentive. Official corruption is the model; and universal corruption follows.

First of all, Simis describes life at the very top. It is, he says, very nice. The ruling elite get paid fifty to sixty times the official minimum wage. But that is, literally, only half of it. They have access to services that are free and to goods that are near-free and unavailable to those who are less equal than they are. Through the "Kremlin Canteen," a system of food stores and dining facilities, they obtain "Kremlin stuff"—foods not found in ordinary stores, and far better than the "town stuff" everyone else has to wait on line for. In addition, they have access to other exclusive shops that sell clothing and other consumer goods, also at cut-rate prices. And, too, they have access to their own system of sanatoria, clinics, and hospitals, all parts of the so-called "Fourth Medical Department" of the Ministry of Health.

Besides the almost limitless goods available to high Soviet officials, Simis reports, there are also luxurious dachas, equipped not only with the finest furnishings but also with generous complements of servants. And there is much else, too; so much, in fact, that Simis wonders why all these advantages—which he considers to be forms of "legalized corruption"—are sometimes not enough. Why, he asks, would any official

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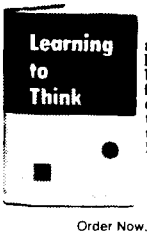
need—or want—anything more? Why, for example, did Frol Kozlov, the Secretary of the Communist Party's Central Committee a quarter of a century ago, and number-two to Khrushchev, need to take hundred-thousand-ruble bribes for appointing people to high positions and for halting criminal proceedings against underground businessmen? And why did Ekaterina Furtseva—who rapidly rose from a position as a laboratory assistant in a medical institute to Minister of Culture and Politburo member—order the building of a dacha, at a cost to the state of 100,000 to 120,000 rubles, for the private use of her daughter?

Simis is puzzled but offers a few reasons. For one thing, none of the perks of high Soviet office belong to the officeholder, and he may want to accumulate wealth of his own. In addition, in a typical bureaucrat's rise to power, he sees corruption of every sort, at every level of the Party or state apparatus; it begins to seem normal, an expected element of official life, and by the time he enters the highest ranks of power there is nothing strange about taking a bribe. Moreover, Simis says, the authorities are reluctant to do anything about official corruption unless it becomes so public as to be unbearably embarrassing; it's so widespread that to eradicate it would result in a mass purge, and such a purge would shatter whatever belief there still is in the infallibility and incorruptibility of the Communist Party itself.

Though Simis begins at the top, with the Kremlin, he focuses most of his gaze at the corruption in the layers below, where it is, in many respects, more interesting. It's more interesting, for example, and certainly more colorful, in Soviet Georgia, where official bribery is flagrant and endemic; in the little towns in the arctic regions of the Soviet Union, where tributes in goods and services are simply expected ways of doing government business; and in the judicial system, with which Simis was especially well-acquainted.

LEARNING TO THINK

By E. R. Emmett



Puzzles, diagrams and examples (both serious and lighthearted) are extensively used by the author who stresses the importance of logic in our everyday lives. He shows us how to think clearly and concisely and to make us enjoy the process. Exercises to test our ability to reason clearly are provided throughout this thought-provoking book. *Illustrated.*

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Probably the most active period of judicial corruption, at least in Moscow, took place, Simis reports, during the 1950s and 1960s, and turned into such an "orgy"—to use Simis's term—that it had to be stopped. Some twenty trials were held, at which about three hundred court investigators, prosecutors, and judges were convicted of taking bribes. Defendants thought that if they confessed and implicated others they would receive light sentences; they were sent, instead, to labor camps for long terms. Some, Simis remembers, did not confess and did not implicate others. One, he believes, a certain Spektor, may not have been guilty:

> He defended himself competently and courageously during the trial. In his final statement he told the court about the torture he had endured during the investigation, and he spoke about the tragedy of a man who had been wrongly accused. He spoke with sincerity and passion. Suddenly he fell silent. Then he said very quietly, "I feel ill, I feel ill. I must have a rest."
>
> "That doesn't matter. Go on with your statement," retorted the judge.
>
> But Spektor did not continue. He suddenly staggered and collapsed at the feet of the person beside him. His wife shrieked and rushed forward, holding out a bottle of heart medicine, but the court guards forced her back. All twenty-nine defendants broke out into a collective, hysterical wail. One of them, a metal worker, hefted a heavy oak bench and uttered an incessant, frenzied cry of "Fucking bosses! Fucking bosses!" The lawyers were shouting; the public was shouting.
>
> The judge announced a recess immediately and an ambulance was called. But it was too late, for Spektor was dead.

Simis describes other orgies of corruption that have taken place in other sectors of Soviet life and that were revealed, from time to time, in the pages of *Pravda* and other Soviet newspapers. Corruption in industry seems to reach public attention with some regularity. A famous case of this, reports of which appeared in the West as well, had to do with the Siversky tractor-repair facility, which was pronounced "ready to commence operation and to achieve its full production capacity" by an official inspection commission in 1978. In reality, most of the plant didn't exist. A Soviet journalist who reported on the scandal at the time described much of the plant as follows: "Rearing up on the trash-bestrewn site were half-built boxes and smashed-up trenches piled high with broken bricks and lumps of dried cement." In other scandals, nonexistent factories, fully operating on paper, were discovered, producing goods that were included in reports issued by the Central Statistical Office. Not that attempts aren't made to combat such phantom factories and nonexistent goods. But when persons who are responsible for building factories or producing goods find it more profitable not to build or produce, or for some reason can't accomplish their pre-set goals, then bribes flow, and inspectors report that all is in order and according to schedule. Often, Simis observes, the bribes are in cash or goods. Sometimes, he adds, they take other forms, such as the provision of rustic retreats for fishing and sex orgies.

PROBABLY the most remarkable segment of Soviet corruption involves the country's underground millionaires. Often using the state's own factories and machinery, they produce goods that they sell "on the left," often of a better quality than goods produced by the state factories themselves. Some of these underground millionaires were Simis's clients, and in writing about them he offers a glimpse of color and flair reminiscent of Babel's Odessa. Simis describes how such business works and the ways in which it not only survives but even plays a necessary role in the overall economy by providing goods that would be otherwise unavailable for private—and, sometimes, even state—consumption.

To be sure, Soviet society is enormously complex, and even the numerous ways in which the grand corruptions mirror themselves in the lives of ordinary citizens—ways that Simis describes—add up to only a small part of a much larger and richer picture. But others have drawn for us the rest of that picture, and Simis is the first to have brought this part of it to our attention with depth and detail. He's the closest thing to an investigative reporter that Russia has produced, and by his creative diligence he's brought out of that country the biggest scoop since John Reed's story of the Russian Revolution. Except that, while Reed's picture of Russia was the before, Simis's is the after.

WALTER REICH

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On Her Toes

Going to the Dance
by Arlene Croce

(Knopf, 428 pp., $20)

Dance has become the most creative and satisfying of America's performing arts, one field in which we continue to outpace competition from abroad. The facts justify a bit of chauvinism. None of the great classically based companies in Europe—and no other artistic institution anywhere—approaches Balanchine's New York City Ballet as a creator and curator of twentieth-century masterpieces. In modern dance, a genre Americans invented, our influence is all-persuasive; every European company visiting these shores is heavily staffed with Americans and top-heavy with works influenced by the founding fathers and mothers. (In European ballet, two of the most active, eclectic, and pernicious choreographers are John Neumeier and Glen Tetley, native sons we can well afford to export.)

American dance of all kinds was attracting growing audiences at home until Reagan's curtailment of federal touring grants reduced "the ballet boom" to something more like a distant rumble. It could easily swell anew, now that audiences whose appetites were whetted by television shows, particularly PBS's "Dance in America," have savored a live performance in all its visceral glory. A recent addict in my family, after seeing the N.Y.C.B. on tour—in Fort Worth, please note—told me that he had expected grace, speed, and the like from *Rubies* and *Symphony in C*, but the "sheer power" of the dances and the dancers had been an overwhelming surprise. Only football and states' rights are supposed to stir Texans up that way.

America may also have the finest dance critic now writing in Arlene Croce. In this second collection, drawn entirely from her columns in *The New Yorker*, she continues to combine a professional's sharp, retentive eye with an amateur's delight in movement of all kinds—"amateur" in the sense of one who loves. She is fortunate to have an employer who grants her the freedom to write whenever she wishes about whatever she chooses. In her introduction, Croce says she requires at least two days to organize her thoughts. Were she on a newspaper, she would work under the pressures of a daily deadline and the need to concoct something—anything—for the Sunday edition. (Not surprisingly, Edwin Denby remains the only writer on dance in the last forty years whose daily journalism is still reprinted.) Magazines could provide a more hospitable environment, but most magazine editors think they can ignore dance. The monthly dance magazines occasionally publish genuine criticism, but the bulk of their pages are squandered on blissfully uncritical articles about superstars, regional companies, and dead Russians; critics are generally assigned one company and 800 words apiece each month to serve as still, small voices of conscience, atoning for such puffery. No collection of the scope of *Going to the Dance* could have been compiled from such assignments.

Croce's range is as amazing as the scholarly authority she possesses. She writes with equal vigor and insight about tap dancing in Harlem, Bournonville traditions in Copenhagen, and pretentious musicals on old Broadway; she seems as much a contemporary of Petipa as she does of Twyla Tharp. Ballet dancers assure me that Croce's technical descriptions match the steps they do. Fortunately for us outsiders, much of her supple, glinting prose abounds with untechnical accounts laced with an often wicked wit. Here she is on Alexander Godunov, the Bolshoi's golden-hippie defector, who looks absolutely marvelous until he begins to dance:

> Godunov is still wandering in his wilderness. He is appreciably a better dancer than he was a year ago, but he still looks as if he might give it all up to play the guitar.

When she wishes to lay down the law, as all true critics ache to do, she does so with a light touch. Croce's most valuable distinction, though, is being a specialist who views her subject through a very wide-angled lens. Knowledge of more than dance steadily shines through her criticism:

> Lincoln Center is an enclave within an enclave. When it was built, it seemed to reflect the philistine notion that art is outside life—an excrescence. Now it reflects the sense that art is outside life—a refuge. It has never stopped being a monument to middle-class virtues, but only if you're a beleaguered middle-class New Yorker can you know what it truly stands for.

The applause [for the Netherlands Dance Theater] was peppered with those falsetto woofs that seem to be taking the place of bravos. Why should the sound of people going into a tizzy be changing in this way? Is it another mark of the Me generation? Bravos, olés—all the traditional audience vocables—say, *'You* were wonderful'; they're directed at the performer. These wordless woofs say, 'I'm wiped out.'

"ENVER HOXHA has won a stunning re-election victory in his bid to remain dictator of Albania. The vote was 1,627,959 for, one against. Actually nine votes were cast against Hoxha, but eight of them were ruled invalid. The Albanian news agency also reports that opposition leader Mehmet Shehu resorted to the 'shameful alternative of suicide'. Look for a unanimous vote next time."

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The Noiseless Tenor:

The Bicycle in Literature

by James E. Starrs

This unprecedented anthology celebrates he delights of bicycling and of literature. That the two can spin along in happy harmony appears in excerpts from Samuel Beckett, V. Nabokov, Kurt Vonnegut, Henry Miller, Iris Murdoch, and others. "The bicycle is mankind's noblest invention," writes William Saroyan in a foreword especially for this collection. Illustrations are included by Charles M. Russell, Frederic Remington, Marcel Duchamp, and others.

Cornwall Books, 4 Cornwall Dr., East Brunswick, New Jersey 08816. $25. 392 pages.

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> . . . the *ouverture miniature* to *The Nutcracker* is a hovering bubble filled with small scurrying creatures and tingling ice.

Croce is in the best company even when she betrays a weakness. At such times, she reminds me of James Agee, another unique critic, whose writings on film were, as Dwight Macdonald put it, marred by

> his directorial imagination which sometimes remade the movie inside his head as he watched it, so that what came out on the page was often more exciting than what had happened on the screen.

Anyone who, on Agee's recommendation, rushed to see Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux* or Pat Jackson's *The Raider* (Pat *Jackson*?) knows exactly what Macdonald means.

I do not for a moment believe that Croce wants to be a choreographer the way Agee wanted to be a director, but as his criticism could be clouded over by his imagination, so hers can be softened by her New York intellectual's hunger for "ideas" in this nonliterary art form. When Croce is discussing modern or "post-contemporary" dance, the appearance of the word "idea" generally heralds a softening of critical standards and a drastic rise in the level of tolerance. She says, quite rightly, that Merce Cunningham "has initiated more new ideas for theatrical performance than any other choreographer" (she acknowledges, too, that "ideas by themselves don't make art"). And look how gingerly she points out his Achilles heel: "If Cunningham's idea is that any sound can accompany any dance anyplace, I think events . . . prove him wrong." There is no excuse for that "if"—Cunningham has said this many times. Croce shows no doubt at all about the shattering electronic doodling that Cunningham's long-time collaborator John Cage fires off as accompaniment: "But how can you watch a dance with V2 rockets whistling overhead?"

THE MERCILESS DIN that so often erupts when Cunningham or his followers perform might bear looking into by the Surgeon General. Impelled to attend performances Karole Armitage gave with a punk-rock combo ("one felt the force of a controlling idea without being able to say precisely what it was"), Croce says that most "of the audience had just enough inner-ear coordination left to get home." Something called "performance art" may not be hazardous to her health; it certainly puts a strain on her prose. Attempts to pin down this elusive genre reads like something out of the late 1960s, when Jack Kaprow was justifying "happenings" and Susan Sontag was elevating Godard's mingier movies:

> Performance art, a newish category, consists of the making and exhibiting of visual events, which may or may not be dances, but which have their existence in time as in space. Most performance art originates in painting, sculpture, or music, and it ends in theatre—usually a kind of wordless theatre that resembles dance. Excitement comes from impurity—from the impingement of various art forms on each other or from the attempt to extend the scope of one art form beyond its normal boundaries.

When I learned that the leading "performer" is a middle-aged man named David Gordon who jogs around his SoHo loft wearing satin gym shorts, I got the idea, all right.

Disagreeing with Arlene Croce can be stimulating and often painfully enlightening. But it is frustrating to find her wasting so much intelligence and perception on matters that are ear- and eyesores. She is needed elsewhere. Whether our dance world is booming or rumbling, there is much work to be done by critics, and no one can perform it better than she.

HARRIS GREEN

Harris Green is a New York City editor who frequently writes on music, theater, and dance.

THE POVERTY OF AHISTORICISM

Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary by Robert Nisbet

(Harvard University Press, 336 pp., $17.50)

Disguised as a philosophical dictionary, this book of short essays is in fact a long, sometimes elegant, often repetitive polemic against the French Revolution. That makes for a problem of timeliness. It also makes for a problem of tone. Edmund Burke's reflections on the same subject are decidedly more temperate. Two hundred years of successive defeats at the hands of revolution, radicalism, and liberalism have given contemporary anti-Jacobins and their writings a bitter edge.

Nevertheless, Robert Nisbet's counter-revolutionary musings are not totally negative. His dismay at the storming of the Bastille derives from a passion for community and for those institutions like family, parish, and village that create community and that interpose themselves between the individual and the state. Nisbet's devotion to this vision of organic community, which the Revolution destroyed, is so powerful that he defines conservatism as that philosophy pledged to its protection. The essence of conservatism, indeed, its "sole object," he says, is "the protection of the social order—family, neighborhood, local community, and region foremost—from the ravishments of the centralized political state." The state, whether democratic or totalitarian, is his nemesis; it detaches one man from his fellow, and unmoors them all from the ancient values. His ideal is quasi-feudal, a vision of the ancien régime where men were linked each to each by ties of kinship, clan, region, guild, and church, and steeped in the virtues of honor, loyalty, discipline, and piety. Burke's defense of this vision, in 1790 when it still animated contemporary reality, was an appeal to history. Nisbet's is an escape to nostalgia.

The distinction between history and nostalgia is important because the great claim of conservatism is that it is the party of history. But the question has always been, which history? To Burke, the word meant living history: the tangle of custom and tradition that evolves organically, layer by layer, over generations, and whose destruction—for the sake of utopian abstraction—means the ruin of society. Contemporary conservatives tend to think of the state as the only abstraction in whose name revolutions are declared. But revolutions are also declared in the name of the past. Khomei-

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ni's revolution, so powerful that it continues to shake the world from Nigeria to Pakistan, overthrew modernity (and the Shah's imperial state) for a return to the seventh century. The more modest Reagan revolution (only yesterday it was written with a capital R) hinged on the promise of a half-century return, to the cozy era of the 1920s before government climbed on our backs and undermined our values (Reagan's "community of values," featuring the Nisbetian family and neighborhood, that he invoked in his acceptance speech at the 1980 Republican Convention). And to dispel any doubts that his vision is of the pre-welfare-state 1920s, the President had Calvin Coolidge's portrait hung in the Cabinet Room. What makes *Prejudices* so interesting, what lifts it out of the category of idiosyncratic, slightly cranky revisionism, is that it mirrors so well, and lends some philosophical luster to, contemporary conservatism's retreat to nostalgia at the expense of history as Burke understood it. In fact, Nisbet's nostalgia goes Reagan's one better: he pines for the lost world not of fifty years ago, but of two hundred.

But it is not just the radical discontinuity between the present and the ideal past that makes Nisbet seem so ahistorical. There is also his account of how this ideal met its demise, an account so single-minded that it has room for but one villain, the state and its ideology of egalitarianism. The history of the last four hundred years ("since the so-called Renaissance," he says with only a touch of irony) is the disintegration of community at the hands of the state.

> It did not matter whether the political power was wielded by king or parliament. The effect over the centuries was the dissolution of communities which lay intermediate to individual and state.

Nothing very unusual here. What is astonishing is Nisbet's calculated underplaying of the role of the other obvious acids of modernity: capitalism, industrialism, mass production, the rise of the industrial working class, modern technology, mass literacy, mechanized agriculture, urbanization, scientific advance, and religious skepticism, to name only a few. In the face of these forces, to condemn state bureaucracy and "lethal tax laws" for undermining the family is to invite ridicule. This is not history, it is demonology.

But his relentless inattention to the modern revolutions in material conditions is not restricted to his analysis of the causes of the decline of community. It carries over to his treatment of its effects. In essay after essay every social ill, from anomie to gambling, is laid at its feet.

Take death. Nisbet observes that "in modern society people are increasingly baffled and psychologically unprepared for the incidence of death among loved ones." They are so mortified at the idea of death "that people are queasily avoiding direct personal contact with death"; instead of tending to the body of their loved ones—after all, "our ancestors could, within the house, wash, dress, adorn, and otherwise minister themselves to the corpse"—"today people leave that to a mortician," a specialist. How does Nisbet approach this problem of the modern bafflement with and distancing from death?

> The socially annihilating individualism—that is, the atomization of society, chiefly by the modern state—that has led to the dismemberment and fragmentation of the traditional forms of community, especially kinship, has removed more and more of the communal properties of death.
>
> . . . [T]he beginning of the end of funerary and mourning rites in modern society is social, a part of that wider tidal movement of modern history that has destroyed so much which lies intermediate between individual and state.

Now one needn't deny that the decline of community (and even the rise of the state) may have something to do with our bafflement at death. But the self-restraint required to avoid mention of more parsimonious explanations is remarkable. How can one ponder the question and ignore—it seems too obvious to mention—the decline of belief in God and the afterlife? And as for people relying on specialists rather than tending to their dead at home, well, since 1789 people have moved into cities. It is hard to know what to do with a corpse in a highrise.

Take inflation. Nisbet insists that it is more than an economic problem; it is a moral one. "Once social class exerted discipline upon taste and desire. So did family and church." These have been undone by

> the great social revolution of egalitarianism, with its destruction of all the moral disciplines that once held mankind in check and its devastation of the social framework within which these disciplines flourished.

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This logic leads him to conclude that

> The only way of checking it [inflation] in the modern world would seem to be for the twin lusts of equality and physical comfort either to subside in the very chaos they create or to be destroyed by a catastrophe of world-wide dimensions.

Such grand Splenglerian thinking has left him quite unprepared for the deflationary effects of an oil glut.

APART FROM ignoring the material revolutions of the last two hundred years, there is another, more profound, sense in which Nisbet's prejudices are ahistorical. Anthony Quinton points out in his brilliant study of English conservative thought, *The Politics of Imperfection*, that conservatism has always defended history—and the stuff of history: tradition, custom, practice—not for its own sake but for its instrumental value. For all its skepticism about abstract theory, conservatism is not completely atheoretical: it believes in the cunning of history. Human reason is radically imperfect; politics must therefore be guided according to the wisdom embodied in tradition and custom. "The individual is foolish," writes Burke, "but the species is wise."

> We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that the stock in each man is small and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nation and of ages.

When history has instrumental value, as it does for Burke, it is not to be worshiped or imitated; it is to be studied and its lessons extracted for application today. The crisis of conservatism, as Disraeli, Salisbury, and other nineteenth-century conservatives discovered, occurs when rapid social change renders history, tradition, and custom less reliable guides to the question of how to act today. For example, when Disraeli confronted the phenomenon of a huge, increasingly self-conscious industrial working class, he knew that it presented him with problems that neither the ancient English constitution nor natural law could answer very well.

Nisbet is able to avoid this dilemma of modern conservatism because his history is not living history. It is not meant to be learned from but longed for. What can we learn from his idealized village community of before the Revolution? And even if we acknowledge all the awful consequences of modernization, what does a static image of preindustrial life tell us? What, for example, are we to do with the elderly and the poor, cut adrift by the demise of village, clan, and family? Nisbet has no answer, which accounts for his despairing tone. Liberals have an answer: let the state intervene to free the elderly from the alms houses (Social Security), sustain the families of the indigent (welfare), and prepare their young for modern life (public education, job training).

It is no theoretical refutation of the liberal position to point out that some of these programs don't work. They can be eliminated and the principle of state intervention retained. Nisbet's attack is more central: state intervention exacerbates the problem it tries to solve by further weakening the structures, like the family, whose weakness caused the problems in the first place. Liberals are well aware of this paradox of state intervention, yet they retain their belief in its legitimacy, because they reject—as ahistorical—the assumption that the state, and not the many material revolutions of modernity, is the cause of society's structural problems. If one believes that everything from cults to crime derives from the rise of the state, one might abjure all state intervention, and be left, like Nisbet, with only despair. Liberals, with their more complex view of causation, have hope, and, more important, plans.

AFTER ALL, what is the alternative? If the conservative complaint is that state action can exacerbate the ills it tries to cure, then that calls for building a better mousetrap to minimize this effect, whether it be Moynihan's Family Assistance Plan or Friedman's Guaranteed Income. And when we have designed state intervention so as to minimize the social dislocation it causes, well, then we have to make choices. The prudent—the conservative—political course is to weigh the costs of state intervention against its benefits. Welfare may be a contributing cause to rising rates of illegitimacy, but does cutting off aid to fatherless children make society more stable (leave aside the question of what it does to the children)?

Tinkering and balancing, however, hold little appeal for Nisbet. Any commerce with the demon state is corrupting, and those who rise to its defense—that is, liberals—are by definition corrupted: "The lover of political power, a liberal is the kneejerk adversary of all moral authority." By the 1940s, "power rather than liberty had become the sustaining value" of liberals. And unable to resist just one more cannon shot in the ancient war, he hastens to add, "in this they were one with their Jacobin predecessors." As he says elsewhere of fanaticism, "it is to zeal what paranoia is to suspicion."

THE VALUE of this book is that it reminds us of the harmonies of organic society and the irreplaceable losses that occur when they are destroyed in the name of abstract principles, whether they are the Declaration of the Rights of Man or urban renewal. For Burke that led to a call for prudence, for a respect for the *present*, rooted as it is in the past. Indeed, it might be argued that the true Burkeans are modern liberals who, rather than remake, want to preserve the delicate fabric of the welfare state, the incremental—yes, organic—social changes of two generations of the New Deal, and the new forms of association that are appropriate to modern industrial society. Contra Nisbet we are not all atoms; there is such a fabric. Michael Novak makes that case quite eloquently in *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, when he argues that we have not lost, we have simply changed our forms of association. Although the ties of the historic family, guild, and clan have been weakened, they have been replaced by equally valid forms of association at the workplace, the community center, even the suburban P.T.A. (One might add, even in totalitarian states: Poland demonstrates that church and class can prove vital forms of association mediating between the individual and even the most overwhelming state power.)

Everyone loves to appropriate philosophical heroes of the past, and Nisbet claims Burke as his own. Yet Burke was loath to tamper with the admittedly imperfect English constitution he inherited. Today it is the much-scorned liberals who want "to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nation and of ages." Nisbet would be a revolutionary—if he had a program. True, his "*écrasez l'infâme*" is issued as a sigh, not a summons. But Burke would hardly approve. As Quinton puts it: "Burke did not want the Stuarts back, nor Hooker some direct continuator of the works of Mary Tudor." Nor should we want the Bourbons restored, or, for that matter, Calvin Coolidge.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

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UNRELIABLE WITNESS

The Longest War: Israel in Lebanon
by Jacobo Timerman
translated from the Spanish by Miguel Acoca

(Knopf, 167 pp., $11.95)

Jacobo Timerman's two long articles on Israel's intervention in Lebanon made a considerable impact when they appeared in *The New Yorker* last October. The present book consists in the main of a slightly enlarged version of these articles. Mr. Timerman is best known in the English-speaking world by the work *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, in which he tells of his experiences as an untried and unacknowledged prisoner of the Argentinian junta. He is a notable writer and *Prisoner Without A Name* is a modern prison classic in the line of Dostoevsky's *House of The Dead.*

Mr. Timerman was an Argentinian Jew; his Jewishness was relevant to his grim experience because the Argentine right and its brutal servants are strongly anti-Semitic. After his release from his clandestine prison, Mr. Timerman went to Israel and became an Israeli. He has now been living in Israel for three years; his eldest son Daniel was called up for service in the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon early last June.

The present journal is in the main an impassioned protest against the fact and course of Israel's war in Lebanon, against Mr. Begin's government, and especially against its Minister of Defense General Ariel Sharon. I say "in the main" because Mr. Timerman also offers some quite strong criticism of some modes of condemning Israel and of supporting the Palestinians. Thus he writes:

> When certain critics accuse us of being Nazis they do General Sharon a great service. Truly we are not Nazis so the accusation serves Sharon by permitting him to discredit the accusers and to retain his innocence. Yet we are not innocent.

He offers a devastating indictment of the P.L.O. sympathizers and the effect of their sympathy:

> All those who approached the Palestinians betrayed them. The democratic political leaders of western Europe led the P.L.O. to feel that they formed part of the same institutional constellation, without warning them that the idea of a secular Palestinian state in which Jews would be a minority was simply the product of a dream, that history does not go back to such a point. When the western Europeans heard the P.L.O. talk of a "Zionist Entity," they did not respond with an explanation of the meaning and power of Israel. They did not warn against dreaming of the liquidation of a state whose power these politicians knew only too well. They allowed the P.L.O. to avoid the issue with ambivalent insinuations that not even the goodwill with which some of us in Israel heard them could convince us that they accepted anything less than the destruction of our country. . . .
>
> Each "political" triumph of the P.L.O. marked by the establishment of a delegation in a Western country was actually one more push toward the abyss into which they fell. Each P.L.O. diplomatic triumph in the U.N. was one more way of alienating the Palestinians from reality. The expression of "solidarity" by dozens of Third World countries was in reality, in its simplicity, a new ring of solitude around the Palestinians.
>
> The Third World cannot help them. It can't help itself. It doesn't even exist. But the Palestinians were given top billing in the scenario that makes people believe in the Third World's power.

But the main thrust of Mr. Timerman's argument is directed against the present government in Israel, its war in Lebanon, and its policy for the West Bank (Judea and Samaria). He finds that there was absolutely no justification for Israel's intervention in Lebanon, since the P.L.O. is not a serious military force, and it and its armaments constituted no serious threat to Israel, which is by far the strongest military force in the region, and one of the strongest in the world. The campaign was conducted ruthlessly, and with little regard for civilian lives, Palestinian or Lebanese. It culminated in the disaster of the letting loose, by order of General Sharon (as now admitted), of the Christian militia that perpetrated the frightful massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila camps. Israel is emerging as "the Prussia of the Middle East" encircling its neighbors, rather than being encircled by them, yet without achieving anything with lasting advantage. . . .

> Everything was singing victory. What remains? Certainly not new opportunities in the region. We are barely participating in the diplomatic moves and our ally has not changed its relationship with the Arab world. Just as before the war, America is striving to strengthen the same countries, seeking new alliances, and its leaders know that in both pursuits what they achieve will depend more upon their attitude toward the Palestinian issue, toward the Palestinian people, then all the military might Israel can deploy.
>
> The new diplomatic and strategic opportunities are for the Egyptians and the French. Egypt has returned to the Arab world without breaking relations with Israel. Yet we were led to believe that we had achieved a division among the Arabs. France in turn returns to the Levant in the name of the democratic and progressive ideals its president stands for in Europe. Yet we were led to believe that the left would never again play a role in the Middle East because it was so engrossed with the Third World that it could not bother with the preservation of Israel.

Most readers will find *The Longest War* an extremely moving document. It is certainly an eloquent personal testimony, and a contribution of lasting significance to the great debate on Israel. But it is also, in some important way, a highly misleading document. Let me try to show

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why I believe this to be the case.

First of all, the grounds for intervention by Israel in Lebanon were not so frivolous as Mr. Timerman suggests. Lebanon had been plunged for the past seven years into a state of anarchy, in which the more powerful elements—the Syrians "Arab Deterrent Force" and the P.L.O.—regarded themselves as being at war with Israel: a war which, in recent times, they have found it expedient to suspend, through a ceasefire. The P.L.O. maintained on Israel's northern border a huge armament, whose raison d'être was the achievement of the objectives of the Palestinian National Covenant: objectives that assume the liquidation of the state of Israel. It is quite true, as Mr. Timerman argues, and as indeed has been proved to be the case, that the P.L.O. forces were utterly incapable, militarily speaking, of achieving those objectives. In military terms, those forces were only effective insofar as they enabled the P.L.O. to overawe the Lebanese and to dominate a part of Lebanon. But in political and symbolic terms, these forces cast a long shadow to the south. They constituted a question mark over the existence of the state of Israel.

EXPERIENCED OBSERVERS knew that the P.L.O. was incapable of liberating Palestine and liquidating Israel. But many young Arabs did not know this: Arabs in the West Bank, in Gaza, in East Jerusalem, in Israel itself, in Jordan. To them, those armed forces only a few miles away, whose guns could be heard every now and then, meant that liberation, and the end of Israel, were on the way. In these conditions, defiance of Israel *à outrance* was appropriate, and any form of negotiation with Israel was treachery, punishable by death. The P.L.O. political agents, and their executioners, were the advance guard of the liberating army, poised just across the border.

Mr. Timerman writes very well about the dangerous illusions of the Palestinians. But he does not acknowledge that the main focus of these illusions was the P.L.O. armed force in Lebanon. Those illusions were dangerous, not only to the Palestinians themselves, but to Israel, both in a general political sense, and through the encouragement given to terrorism. Was it then altogether irrational and absurdly arrogant—as Mr. Timerman suggests—for the government of Israel to decide to prick the bubble: to demonstrate the military futility of those forces—in the only way that could be done—and to get rid of the hostile forces from the neighboring lands? I believe that any other government, facing a situation at all closely analogous to what Israel faced on its northern border, would have taken the same basic decision, at an appropriate time.

Mr. Timerman argues, in effect, that Israel is not "any other government," and that higher ethical standards are expected from it. It is an impressive argument, in the mouth of an Israeli, and it is extremely impressive that so many Israelis have voiced it and shown they mean it. But I don't think that a foreign and gentile commentator, like myself, has any particular right to endorse that argument. We have no right to demand higher ethical standards from others than from ourselves.

MR. TIMERMAN takes, as we have seen, the view that the new situation created by the eviction of the P.L.O. from Lebanon does not create "any new opportunity in the region." This is an eccentric opinion, and the reasons Mr. Timerman gives in support of it have a superficial and random look. The fact is that the eviction of the P.L.O. from Lebanon has dramatically altered the whole political ecology of the region. The calling of the P.L.O.'s military bluff shifts the balance inside the P.L.O. itself, and obviously to the disadvantage of the military. Among the Arab states, the balance shifts in favor of the (relatively) moderate states, and against the "confrontationists," whose bluster is discredited by their recent total inactivity. Egypt's peace with Israel has become less easy to denounce, since the denouncers—with the largely involuntary exception of Syria—would no more defend the Palestinians than Egypt did. Arafat meets with Hussein. Gemayel is received in Riyadh. An American set of proposals—which actually exclude a Palestinian state—was gratefully received by the representatives of the Arab states assembled by Fez, though a cooler view was taken later at Damascus. The Arabs, though with variations in emphases, seem distinctly more inclined than they were, before the expulsion of the P.L.O., to the view that half a loaf is better than no bread.

Now this disposition on the part of the Arabs does seem to create a new and wonderful opportunity—for those who want such an opportunity. It is an opportunity to negotiate a settlement of the West Bank, with Israel's surrendering some occupied territory, in exchange for recognized and secure frontiers and peace, at last, with all her neighbors—the serene panorama contemplated in Security Council Resolution 242 and in President Reagan's recent proposals.

The tragic paradox is that those who did most to create that opportunity—Mr. Begin's government—are those least likely to make any use of it. For Mr. Begin, indeed, an Arab inclination to negotiate seriously about the West Bank does not constitute an opportunity: it constitutes a problem. Mr. Begin has no intention of negotiating about the West Bank, except in terms of the cosmetics of occupation. Mr. Begin is indeed capable of statesmanship, and the courage of statesmanship: he showed that over the evacuation of Sinai (and the eviction of Jewish settlers) and he had shown it before, in 1948, at the time of the foundation of the state of Israel, when he did more than any man to avert civil war between Israelis. But Mr. Begin is not about to be statesmanlike over the West Bank. For him, as for his mentor, Vladimir Jabotinsky, that territory is Judea and Samaria, sacred soil, never to be abandoned. As long as Mr. Begin holds power, Israel will not give up an inch of the West Bank.

So the opportunity created will not now be taken. But the opportunity is likely to outlast Mr. Begin. I share Mr. Timerman's hope that a future government of Israel will aim at serious negotiations, in the spirit of Resolution 242, with the Arabs. But I think it should be recognized at the start that the task of such a future government will be greatly eased by the fact that it will not have to negotiate in the shadow of a P.L.O. armed presence on its border—and of widespread Arab illusions that a military alternative is available to them if Israel fails to meet their terms.

'SAEVA INDIGNATIO' is a good aid to literary creation, but it can distort reality, in a creative and indignant sort of way. Mr. Timerman's indignation is primarily directed at Mr. Begin and General Sharon—partly appropriately in the first case, and entirely so in the second—but his indignation tends to spill over, as this bubbly substance will, into other objects. Mr. Timerman's references to the "Sephardi Israelis"—the community from which Mr. Begin draws his main support—are brief and unsympathetic. There are just two of these refer-

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ences. The first is in the context of a mass demonstration in Tel Aviv against the war in Lebanon.

> Someone remarks that almost all of us there are Ashkenazis, only a few are Sephardic. I'm not impressed by the observation, nor do I feel guilty because the least socially and culturally developed sector of the population is against us and chants: "Begin, King of Israel." I have seen their counterparts in Argentina, solidly behind Perón. . . . The loyalty of these classes, always a majority, toward charismatic and seemingly invincible leaders guarantees neither the rationality nor the health of a political situation.

That's all, despite the fact that the Sephardi Jews—originating mainly from Arab countries—are now more than half the population, and are playing an increasingly important part in shaping its destiny. To write them off simply as "counterparts" to people in a very different situation, in a very different country, is far from illuminating.

THE OTHER REFERENCE to the Sephardim is even briefer. Among a number of undesirable things that in Mr. Timerman's opinion cannot be halted if we don't take to heart the true character of the Palestinian problem is the following: "the artificial promotion of confrontation between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Israelis."

The context clearly implies that the confrontation has been artificially promoted by Mr. Begin and his friends. But in fact a confrontation—through the limited but real extent to which it exists—is inherent in the situation, and there is nothing artificial about it. Israelis of European origin feel, in varying degrees, some guilt about the Palestinians. Israelis of Asian and African origin have, in general, no such feeling. They are proud when they see their country's leaders "standing up to the Arabs"—as they and their ancestors were unable to do, over so many generations, in the lands from which they came. The state of their feelings is unfortunate, and dangerous both for Israel and the Arabs, but it is entirely natural. And the notion of Mr. Begin as a promoter of confrontation between the two Israeli communities is really a bit odd, since he is one Ashkenazi politician who is loved by the Sephardim of Israel.

Toward the end of his book, Mr. Timerman's indignation spills over against Israeli democracy itself. Writing of the investigation into the massacres of Palestinians he declares:

> I have little faith in Israel's democratic opposition. I fear that the Israeli discipline which totally dominates the subconscious of all of us will result in an investigation that, in effect, protects the criminals from the punishment they deserve, and that the Israeli people will suffer an overwhelming loss of respect and moral standing in the eyes of the world.

By the time those words first appeared in print (*The New Yorker*, October 25, 1982), it was already clear that he should have had more faith, and that his fear was exaggerated. Mr. Begin, indeed, would have liked to get away with the kind of investigation Mr. Timerman postulates, but Israel's democratic opposition—and especially, Israel's free press—would not let him. The press of Israel, almost without exception, was unsparing in its exposure of the details of what happened at Sabra and Shatila, and in its demolition of the government's attempted coverup. The press exposure, and the manifestations of public outrage that accompanied it, forced Mr. Begin to concede a genuine investigation, which is still in progress as I write this. There's nothing "protective" about its proceedings, any more than there was anything protective about the Israeli press coverage of the events in question.

General Sharon in particular has rightly taken a fearful hammering in the course of these proceedings. The General must wish that the discipline which totally dominates the "subconscious" of Israelis, for the protection of Israeli war criminals, would manifest its presence a little more definitely.

THERE HAS BEEN no war in modern times—and probably no war ever—in which so much public opinion in a given country has reacted so promptly against its own country's war. I lived in France during the war in Algeria, and in America during part of the war in Vietnam. In both cases it took years and much discouraging news before protest really took off. In the case of the Lebanon war it took off within weeks, amid total victory for the army of Israel. It seems to me that the French and the Americans—and I would add the British and the Irish—have more of that protective subconscious discipline that Israelis have demonstrated in this case.

Mr. Timerman's indignation rather often clouds his judgment; there are occasions when it also clouds his perception. This is most markedly the case in the section of his book that deals with Lebanon. He has gotten it into his head that the Lebanese hate and fear the Israeli occupying forces, and when the Lebanese tell him different, he knows better than to believe them. Here he goes about Tyre:

> Those of us who have been in prison know how to speak with our eyes so that we can be understood when forced to talk in the presence of the guards. This is how I know that what a cordial and pleasant Lebanese is saying is contradicted by what I see expressed in his eyes. His English is clumsy, his phrases are stereotyped. Whoever has been a prisoner or been forced to surrender knows how degrading this moment can be.
>
> I understand the serene dignity of his gaze, and I recognize his proud personality. So I tell him what one prisoner tells another when they share oppressive circumstances: I wish him luck, lots of luck, and I ask him to have faith, lots of faith. I say this in a few French words, a signal of respect for his cultural tradition, and I hope that he understands I'm paying homage to his identity. Of course, I wish that I could tell him much more, but we prisoners know it is dangerous to compromise anyone who remains in custody. We know, too, that even listening can be dangerous. So I bow my head a little when I shake his hand: "*Adieu, mon cher monsieur.*" I want to ask his forgiveness.

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Now it so happens that I was in Lebanon, including Tyre, at the same time as Mr. Timerman—the second week of July—and my impressions were quite different. So were the impressions of all the foreign correspondents with whom I compared notes. We all felt that the people who said "*shalom*" said *shalom* because *shalom* was what they felt like saying. We felt that the people who were "cordial and pleasant" to the Israelis were that way because that was how they felt. We formed the belief that most Lebanese—obviously there are exceptions—thought of the Israelis, not as occupying invaders, but as their liberators from the P.L.O. They didn't feel that they had been "subdued by force" by the Israelis. They felt the Palestinians had been subdued by force, thus relieving the Lebanese of an oppressive burden, if at a high cost. The invasion of Lebanon is unique among invasions in that it was strongly resented and condemned by people in other countries—who read about it and saw some of its incidents on television—but not by most of the people of the country invaded.

I KNOW that some, perhaps many, of my readers will find the above statement incredible, and some of you may feel it to be perhaps motivated by a desire to whitewash evil deeds. Not so. But let me be clear about my sources. The first source, though by no means the only one, was a series of personal interviews with Lebanese, at the very time about which Mr. Timerman is writing here. Like Mr. Timerman, I went into southern Lebanon with an Israeli escort. Mr. Timerman says that his escort wouldn't let him walk alone in Tyre, telling him it was too dangerous. He implies that this was a pretense, and that the real reason was the desire of the Israelis to prevent him from finding out what the Lebanese really thought. On my own visit to Tyre, I didn't ask to walk around, because I thought myself it was too dangerous: the damage being extensive and recent, with possibilities of unexploded devices and other unpleasantness. But in other centers in southern Lebanon, where the damage had been less great, and life had gotten more or less back to normal, I did tell my escorts I wanted to walk around on my own, and they raised no objection. Thus I talked, without any Israelis present, with Lebanese in the small town of Hatzveya, which is Druse, and in the small town of Nabatiyya, which is mainly Shi'i Muslim, like most of the population of southern Lebanon, including Tyre and Sidon. (I knew a little about the local background because I had spent a month in Lebanon the previous September, mainly in the south.) I looked for people speaking either French or English, and I found quite a few. I have recorded some of these conversations in detail in *The Observer* of London, but I shall just put down the bare gist of them here.

EVERYBODY was glad the Israelis had gotten rid of the Palestinians. The damage and loss of life incurred in the process seemed to be accepted as unavoidable (most people did not refer to these at all). Nobody made any complaints about the Israelis, but nobody wanted them to stay in Lebanon. They wanted them to leave, but not before they had made quite sure the Palestinians would never come back. And it is not just a matter of my personal impression as against Mr. Timerman's. The other visiting foreign correspondents I mentioned, who had had their separate opportunities of talking with Lebanese in the absence of Israelis, had exactly the same general impression as my own.

The rather startling fact that most Lebanese—including Muslims and Druses, as well as Christians—were glad that Israel invaded Lebanon is one that has hardly gotten through to the public in the West. The correspondents resident in the region have indeed acknowledged the existence of this phenomenon, but they have generally done so unobtrusively, by way of asides, which tend to get lost in a mass of more dramatic, and more readily assimilable, material. But there is one authority in the region who has recently explored the topic more explicitly than is customary. I shall introduce this authority now because I feel that, without him, some readers are still more likely to prefer the Timerman version.

Mr. Patrick Seale is Middle East correspondent of *The Observer*. He speaks Arabic, so he is not reduced like myself (and I think Mr. Timerman) to looking for Lebanese who speak English or French. He is a highly respected specialist on the region. Also he is trusted in the Arab world, regarded with a corresponding reserve in Israeli official circles. Here is what he has to say, writing in the aftermath of Israel's withdrawl from Beirut (*The Observer*, October 24, 1982):

> Beirut's euphoria at the return of peace has not abated. The clearing away of the barricades dividing the city, the presence everywhere of government and multinational forces, and particularly the disappearance from the streets of armed irregulars have all bred a new and heady sense of security.
>
> In everyone's mind, but not often voiced, is the knowledge that but for Israel's invasion, the expulsion of the Palestinian guerrillas and the last push into West Beirut with its terrible overspill of massacres, the Lebanese would not now be enjoying the passing of their long nightmare.
>
> Israel did their "dirty work" for them, but in the thankless manner of human beings, few Lebanese want the Israelis to reap the political prize of a Lebanon under Israeli influence.

Lebanon will not be under Israeli influence. But it will be free from the P.L.O. because the Lebanese want it that way, and Israel has made it possible for them to have what they want.

Having found *The Longest War* defective in some important ways, both in analysis and in description, I should like to end by praising it as literature. I can't do so unreservedly, because one's judgment of the writing, in the case of such a document as this, depends to a large extent on one's judgment of the situations written about. Thus, if you can believe Mr. Timerman's interpretations of what he saw and heard in Tyre, you are likely to be impressed by the passage quoted, beginning "those of us who have been in prison . . ." and ending "I don't fraternize with those I have subdued by force."

Perhaps one should still be impressed and moved by the passage, as literature, even if you know, as I do, that it is all stuff and nonsense. Personally, I cannot manage such a feat of aesthetic detachment. I find the passage faintly nauseating, an insensitive display of sensibility. That is Mr. Timerman at his worst, which hits more often than I would wish. But he has frequent short, sharp bursts of shrewd insight—some of which I quoted near the beginning. His testimony is of high importance, even if much of it must be contested. His book will be quoted by historians of Israel for many years to come, whenever they consider the fateful summer of 1982.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

Conor Cruise O'Brien, a former Irish Cabinet minister, was editor-in-chief of *The Observer* of London. Among his many books are *The United Nations: Sacred Drama* and, most recently, *Herod: Reflections on Political Violence.*

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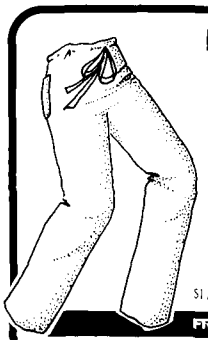

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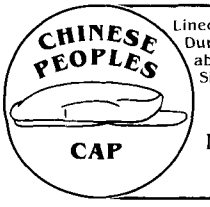

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Citizen Reagan

I DON'T KNOW how you spent 1982, but I spent it Reagan-watching. I had to; it's my job to know what the President and his media-shrewd staff are up to. Just before each day's House session, my boss, the Speaker, holds a free-wheeling, not-for-broadcast news conference. It's where the wire services catch the morning weigh-in for the toughest match-up in American politics: Reagan-O'Neill, the Irish sluggers. So each morning I walk the seven blocks from my home to the Capitol, mulling over what I've just read in the morning newspapers and what I saw on the TV news the night before, trying to psych out the current Reagan tactics and figure how to foil them. What has quickened my stride on more than one morning is not just the thrill of anticipation, but the full, sick realization of what we are up against. A Speaker's skeletal staff isn't much compared to the media city-state the President, any President, has serving him in the West Wing and the Old Executive Office Building.

EVERY PRESIDENT has a lot of P.R. machinery, but what has given this one his peculiar strength as a media force is the skill with which he projects himself not as a head of government but as a neighborly guy who doesn't like government any more than you do. I got my first close-up look at this skill about a year ago, on the night of the 1982 State of the Union address. It turned out that the President's holding room that night, the place where he was taken by the Secret Service and the House Sergeant-at-Arms before the speech, was the Speaker's ceremonial office. This ornate chamber, complete with giant gilt mirror and enormous chandelier, is also the site of the Speaker's daily attacks against everything this particular Republican President stands for. On being introduced, I pointed to the irony. "Mr. President," I said, trying to break the ice, "this is the room where we plot against you." "But not after six o'clock," he replied instantly. "The Speaker says that in Washington after six we all put politics aside." He even joked about his apparent nervousness. "Like opening night," he said. Politically, if not theatrically, his pre-curtain butterflies were justified: Reaganomics, after all, had been a bust since the day he had put his signature on it the previous August. So he devoted his State of the Union to the evils of government. A year into his term, he played the role of outraged citizen, appalled at the incompetence and excess of Washington bureaucracy. His delivery was boffo, of course, but his premise was even better: that this President was not Chief Executive but Chief Critic, upset at a government that kept letting him down.

THE NEXT TIME I saw Reagan at the Capitol he was not alone. It was April 28, and he had come up for his "walk-the-extra-mile" budget negotiations with the Speaker. As it turned out, this was not a quiet, out-of-the-way meeting to reconcile a budgetary stalemate. The President had stacked the deck for maximum hype and minimum results. Entourage-wise, he might as well have been traveling to China. As I turned the corner to the Senate lobby—the meeting was held in the President's Room, just outside the chamber itself—I saw what must have been hundreds of reporters, held back by stanchions, with Larry Speakes gliding along in front of them, throwing out tidbits like a keeper at Sea World. It soon became apparent that the Reagan media-meisters had something big in mind. Lesley Stahl of CBS hit me with the news that the White House staff was telling reporters that the Democrats had come up with a plan to cut Social Security benefits. Trying to control myself, I explained that the Democrats' offer had in fact been a mild counterproposal to a David Stockman-endorsed plan to make major cuts in the system's cost-of-living adjustments. When I gave the Speaker this little piece of news, it confirmed his worst suspicions. What the White House staff had been peddling outside the negotiating room was consistent with its tactics inside the room. The one document placed on the table by the White House staff set forth the Democratic counter-offer and made no mention of the initial and much tougher proposal agreed to by Stockman & Co. In fact, the budget talks had just broken down over the President's refusal to state that he even had a position on Social Security. The ambush culminated in the West Wing briefing room. With the White House press corps safely back home, the President's aides again put out the company line: it was the Democrats who wanted to cut Social Security. It didn't sell, even later, when it became the basis of a high-priced Republican ad campaign featuring your friendly postman delivering monthly checks. All it did was to turn Social Security into a political football, precluding any immediate prospect of bipartisan action.

AS THE MONTHS of 1982 passed, the President's men got worried: people were starting to notice that the President's budget called for the biggest deficits in American history. To keep the blame for the deficits where he wanted it, the President came back to the Hill in the heat of the July summer. The day's event was a "balanced budget" rally on the West Front, organized by the Republican National Committee. It was quite a spectacle. With the dome of the Capitol towering behind him, there stood Ronald Reagan—petitioning for redress of grievances, just like the Constitution says we citizens have a right to do. There he stood, letting those officeholders know that he was so concerned about deficits that he had come all the way up to Capitol Hill to complain about them. There he stood, leading a rally against those in government who perversely refuse to balance the budget.

THE PRESIDENT liked the July rally against deficits so much that he came back for a similar rally in September. But with unemployment cresting at 10 percent, the act was beginning to wear thin. Now another January has rolled around, and it'll soon be time for another State of the Union address. Maybe the President will try again to pose as someone outside of government. But a couple of weeks ago, when he was threatening to veto a jobs bill, he let something slip. "Just remember," he said, "for every person who is out of work, there are nine of us with jobs." His phrasing may have been infelicitous (if the employed are "us," are the unemployed "them"?), but he was right about one thing: he, Ronald Reagan, has a job. He's President of the United States. It has taken two years, but he is finally becoming the kind of person he has long made his target: an incumbent.

CHRISTOPHER MATTHEWS

Christopher Matthews is administrative assistant to the Speaker of the House.

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